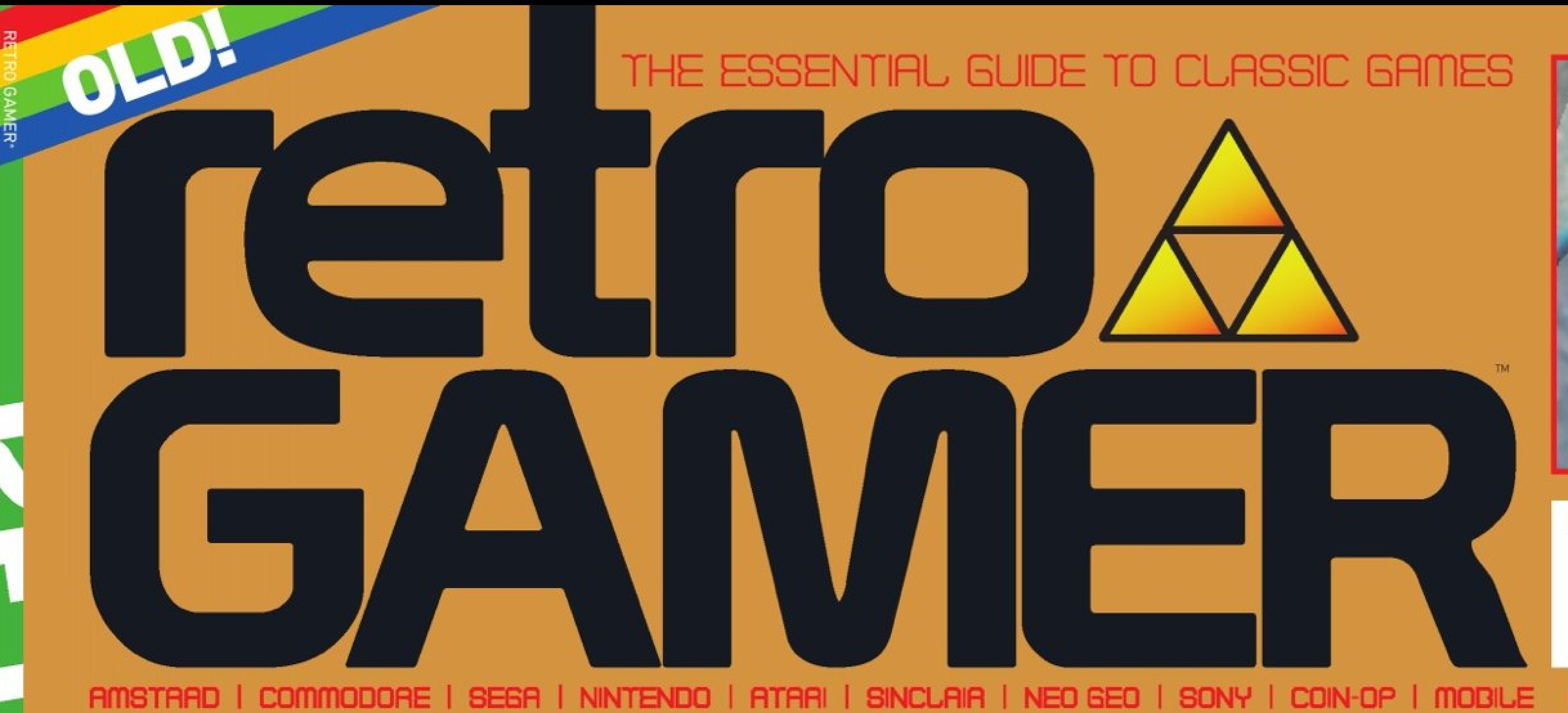






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OLD!

THE LEGEND OF ZELDA OCARINA OF TIME

25 YEARS OF ZELDA

COLLECTORS EDITION



WE CELEBRATE NINTENDO'S HIT FRANCHISE AND REVISIT LINK'S GREATEST ADVENTURE



THE RETROBATES

BEST MEMORY OF THE LEGEND OF ZELDA: OCARINA OF TIME



DARRAN JONES
Yes, it's obvious, but as I mentioned in my editorial, stepping out onto Hyrule Field for the first time was incredible.
Expertise:
Steering the helm of an award-winning magazine
Currently playing:
Persona 3 Portable
Favourite game of all time:
Strider



STUART HUNT
Awakening as adult Link and seeing Hyrule transformed was a special moment. It made a compelling game something I had to drop everything to finish.
Expertise:
Games with flying bits in them
Currently playing:
Mortal Kombat
Favourite game of all time:
Mortal Kombat



JASON KELK
Playing the Song Of Storms with the Ocarina at the windmill and the effect it has.
Expertise:
Swearing at broken machine code
Currently playing:
Voidrunner (C16)
Favourite game of all time:
Io



ASHLEY DAY
I'll go with the battle with Ganondorf where he leaps out of the paintings astride his warhorse. Boss battles don't come much better than that.
Expertise:
The games of Team17, *Shining Force* and the Amiga CD32
Currently playing:
Nin2-Jump
Favourite game of all time:
Shining Force III



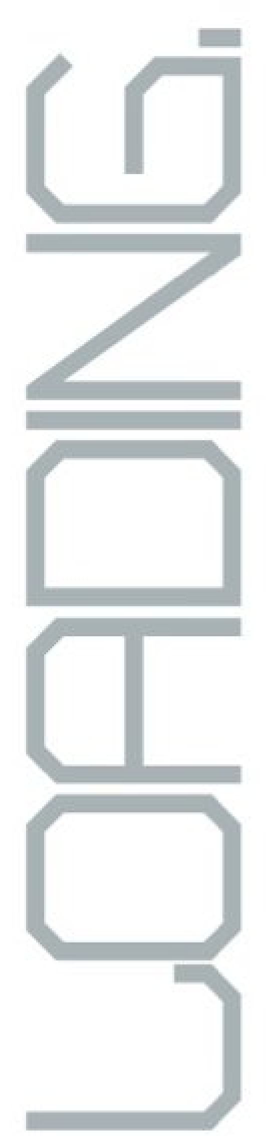
PAUL DRURY
Mounting Epona for the first time. I've just realised that that sounds horribly wrong.
Expertise:
Ice sculptures
Currently playing:
Patapon 3
Favourite game of all time:
Sheep In Space




PAUL DAVIES
Link's transformation at the Temple of Time felt like pure magic for me
Expertise:
Banging my head against a brick wall
Currently playing:
Monster Hunter Tri
Favourite game of all time:
Ghouls 'N Ghosts



IAIN LEE
I just remember the first time I saw it. It looked amazing and played beautifully. It was one of those awesome moments when you realised videogames had just taken another giant leap forward.
Expertise:
Pretending to be an American on Xbox Live
Currently playing:
Portal 2
Favourite game of all time:
Elite (BBC Model B)



There are certain gaming moments that you never ever forget. Cart-wheeling over an icy crevasse in *Strider*, finally finishing off your brother Leanoric in *Feud*, and finding all four pieces of the fabled amulet in *Sabre Wulf* are all precious memories that I can instantly recall. All of these pale, though, next to stepping out onto Hyrule Field for the first time in *The Legend Of Zelda: Ocarina Of Time*.

Despite the fact that it wasn't really the first sandbox game, the realisation that you could go virtually anywhere once you left the safety of Kokiri Forest was astonishing. It wasn't the only high point of Nintendo's incredible game, though, and it's little wonder that after 13 years of transfixing gamers with its clever design, touching characters and wondrous scale, Nintendo is to release a brand new 3D update for a new generation of gamers to enjoy.

We pay our own tribute to the world-changing game, along with developers and readers, on page 24, while the celebrations for *Zelda*'s 25th anniversary continue with looks at the underrated *Four Swords Adventures* and the original NES advenutre.

And don't worry if you're not a fan of the evergreen hero, as there's still plenty of great content to work your way through.

Enjoy the magazine,







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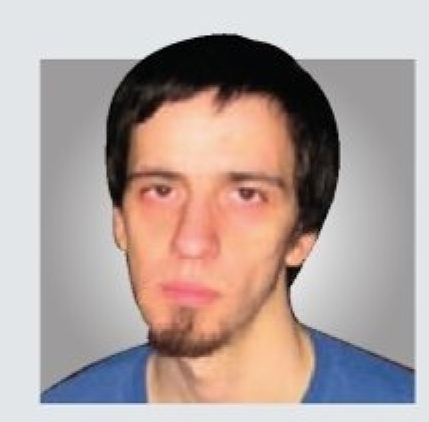
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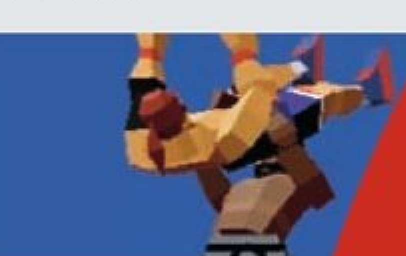
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22 VIRTUA FIGHTER

Forum member Neuromancer takes a fond look back at the excellent port of *Virtua Fighter* on Sega's 32X add-on for the Mega Drive.





ESSENTIALS

RETRO RATED





retro radar

>> GIVE US TWO MINUTES AND WE'LL GIVE YOU THE RETRO WORLD



>> It's the eve of Sonic's 20th birthday and Sega has just announced a brand new game starring the blue hedgehog. First impressions look good, and this could be a worthy successor to the superb *Sonic Colours*. We also have an interview concerning RuneScape's 10-year anniversary, while Brandon Cobb discusses Super Team Fighter's next Mega Drive game

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SEEING DOUBLE

SEGA CELEBRATES THE ANNIVERSARY OF ITS MASCOT WITH THE REVEAL OF A BRAND NEW SONIC GAME

Even the most fervent of Sega fanboys will admit that *Sonic* hasn't exactly had the best of times since moving to the third dimension. For every *Sonic Colours* there is a *Sonic Heroes*, or a *Sonic Riders* or even a *Sonic The Hedgehog*, and while the games themselves often sell very well, they're rarely as critically lauded as their brilliant 2D forehedgehogs.

And yet, every time a new *Sonic* game is announced, we become dizzily excited. We ignore the infamous *Sonic* cycle and pray against all reasonable odds that this time Sega will do us proud with a *Sonic* game that captures, the speed, control and fun of his original 16-bit outings. We've been here before, but *Sonic Generations* really could be that game.

After all, if we're brutally honest, Sonic's last few outings have actually been pretty damned enjoyable, proving that the blue Erinaceidae is more than capable of a rousing good old-fashioned platformer. *Sonic The Hedgehog 4: Episode I* was a solid enough piece of digital content, while *Sonic Colours* was an awesome return to form that impressed us so much that we gave it a higher score than Retro Studios' also impressive *Donkey Kong Country* reboot.

It's for these very reasons that we're confident that *Sonic Generations*, as it's currently known, will be able to continue the high standard set by *Colours*, even if the core conceit worries us just a teensy weensy bit.

For, you see, the big hook here – and let's face it: it wouldn't be a 3D *Sonic* game without one – is that *Sonic Generations* features two Sonics. That's right. Two Sonic the hedgehogs.

Sonic Generations stars both a 'Classic' version of Sonic and a 'Modern' version, and looks set to be a loving homage to the past 20 years of the blue blur's adventures. The crux of the story, which is being worked on by the same

> **" We're confident that Sonic Generations will be able to meet the standard of Sonic Colours "**



» [Xbox 360] Look how awesome this looks. It also makes us want to track down every picture ever posted of the *Sonic* cycle and rip them to pieces.

* GO DEEPER

>> *Sonic Generations* has a gimmick, but it's a good one. You have access to both old-school Sonic as well as his modern day counterpart

>> Sonic's birthday is 23 June. Rumours that he has two birthdays a year like the Queen are greatly exaggerated

>> *Sonic Generations'* producer is Takashi Iizuka. He's an old hand with *Sonic* now, having worked on the series since *Sonic 3*

developers that steered *Sonic Colours* to great success, involves an unnamed villain – we're betting that it's going to be Dr Robotnik – who has created multiple time holes that will force Sonic and his friends back in time, and hopefully cause Shadow to get swallowed out of existence when his time hole collapses on him.

It all sounds a little crazy to us, but the upshot is that it will result in the ability to play levels in the game in two distinct ways, either as Classic Sonic or as Modern Sonic. Classic Sonic's levels are shown in 2D, while Modern Sonic's levels are 3D versions and feature Sonic's now-standard running-into-the-screen shenanigans. This in itself is rather cool, because *Sonic The Hedgehog* aside, all of Sonic's 3D games have had really decent level design – it's when they let you off the rails that things normally fall apart. *Sonic Generations* feels more like a natural evolution of *Sonic Colours* and that pleases us greatly.

Hardcore fans will also be pleased to hear that the physics of Classic Sonic will be far closer to the original 16-bit games than any other *Sonic* title. We'll admit that we had no real problems with Sonic's inertia in *Sonic 4*, but considering the mass hysteria from some corners of the internet, it's hardly surprising that Sega is doing everything it can to ensure that the franchise's fanboys remain happy.

In addition to the way levels play out, *Generations* features distinct differences in the playing styles of the two available Sonics. Classic Sonic levels will feature well-loved mechanics like the Spin Dash and Spin Attack, while Modern Sonic utilises abilities such as the Speed Boost and Homing Attack, ensuring that the two approaches should feel very distinctive in the way that they play.

Sonic fans are constantly up in arms about the way their beloved hero is treated – even if new games, particularly on the Wii, have been consistently getting better – so this seems to be a clever attempt from Sega to keep both sets of fans happy.

We're a little concerned about the inclusion of Sonic's friends, as mentioned in *Sonic Generations*' first press release, and we're still not sure how original 2D levels like Green Hill Zone will work when thrust into 3D, but we're still incredibly excited about *Sonic Generations*. Sega's new game is looking like a fine return to form for the company's mascot, and let's not forget that the downloadable *Sonic The Hedgehog 4: Episode II* should appear sometime this year as well. Looks like 2011 really could be the year of the hedgehog. ✱



» [Xbox 360] You can tell it's Modern Sonic because he has green eyes. Classic Sonic has black eyes.





» [Xbox 360] There's no news of *Sonic Generations* on the Wii, further adding fuel to the Wii HD rumours that are spreading across the internet.



>> Sonic Generations: Who's excited?



thevulture
Sonic should stay 2D. Tried various 3D incarnations, but they just seem to fail to capture a mere ounce of the 2D games.

TheNewMonkey
Me! It's looking like a nice high-res version of *Sonic Colours* with classic Nineties Sonic included!

Rayne
I couldn't help but yelp with excitement when I saw the classic Sonic design again. Lots has been promised. I'll wait to see if it can deliver.

Vyothric
Sonic what now?

C=Style
I'm pretty excited but not as much as I was with *Colours*. Still, this does look like it's shaping up well.

DigitalDuck
I'm very excited. The last couple of main series *Sonic* games were excellent, and this looks as though it'll be keeping up the pace.

GigaPepsiMan
The recent *Sonic* titles have all seen improvements. When you take the Werehog away *Unleashed* was a solid title; *Sonic Colours* fixed a lot of the shortcomings in *Unleashed* and improved the overall gameplay. This attempt should be a best of both worlds but that doesn't mean people will be happy.

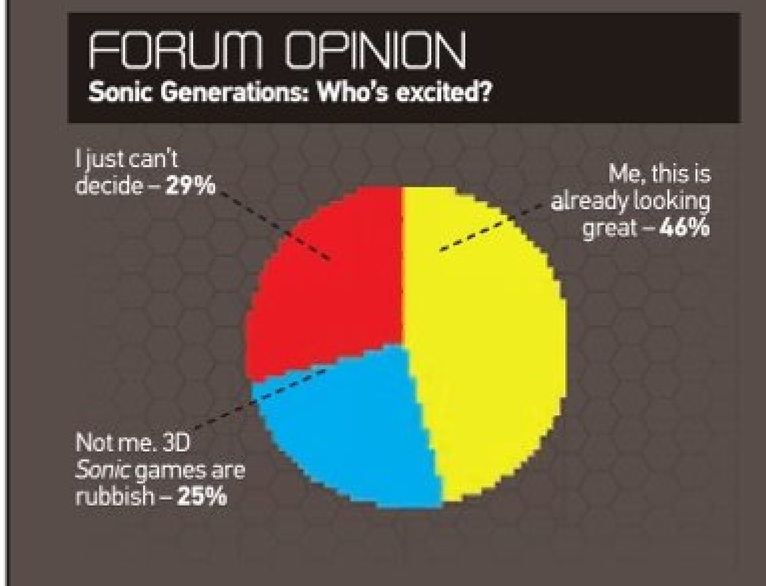
ShadowMan
I'm looking forward to it. I'm so far liking the idea of each stage having both a classic and a modern design where the classic level is fully 2D while the modern one is a mix of 2D and 3D – hopefully closer to *Colours* than to *Unleashed* in style.

nakamura
It is looking far too on-rails to be any good. Not sure about it yet.

Fightersmegamix
Old *Sonic* games with 3D bits? Sounds terrible. Just release 2D remakes.

FORUM OPINION

Sonic Generations: Who's excited?

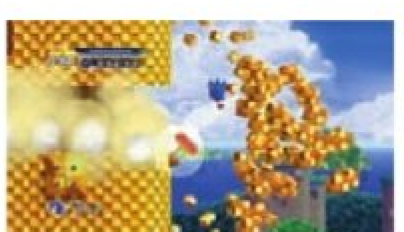


Sonic games for 2011

>> Sega's determined to bring Sonic back to the fore this year

Sonic Generations

This is obviously the big one that Sega is making a huge song and dance about, and it's not hard to see why, as it's looking flipping brilliant so far. It might just be Sega's Holy Grail of a *Sonic* game that works for both long-standing fans and those who like the new games. Everyone loves Classic Sonic, so getting him to feature in 2D action levels while his more modern counterpart speeds around in 3D stages appears to make perfect sense. Sega is keeping many of the game's details close to its chest at this moment in time, but you can guarantee that more information about *Sonic Generations* will arrive as we approach the upcoming anniversary of Sonic's big day, which is 23 June, in case you've forgotten about it.



Sonic The Hedgehog 4: Episode II

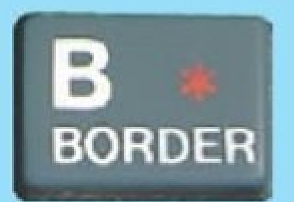
Sonic The Hedgehog 4 appeared to split fans down the middle, with some genuinely enjoying the clever level design, while others were having fits because his physics wasn't identical to that of a game that came out 19 years previously. It would appear that the controversy may well resurface later this year, as 2011 is the perfect opportunity for Sega to release the next instalment of the episodic game. Information about the second part is amazingly scarce, although Sega brand manager Ken Balough did mention at the beginning of February that: "*Episode II* is in early development now." Needless to say, expect more news as and when we get it.

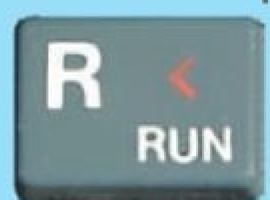


Sonic Compilation

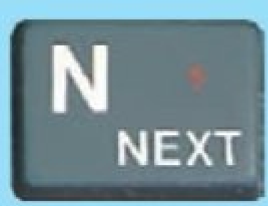
The internet is a crazy place, with all sorts of rumours flowing around. One of the most interesting is that Sega will be unleashing a new compilation to celebrate *Sonic*'s anniversary. While Sega has proven to be quite adept at getting the most out of its back catalogue, the fact that we're getting so near to the date suggests that this is nothing more than a pipe dream. Still, we know Nintendo has something special planned for *Zelda* later this year, and we're sure it'd be relatively easy to cram *Sonic Mega Collection Plus* and *Sonic Gems Collection* onto one disc.

Here's the bio...
Iain Lee has been a fervent gamer since he was tiny. And that was a long time ago. In between playing computer games and collecting crap from eBay, he has presented Channel 4's *The 11 O'Clock Show* and *Rise*, and currently does bits of stand-up as well as presenting the *2 Hour Long Late Night Radio Show* on Absolute Radio at 11pm.





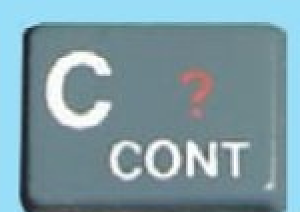


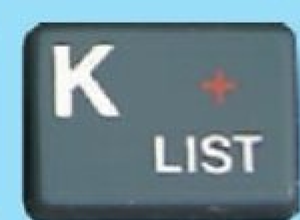


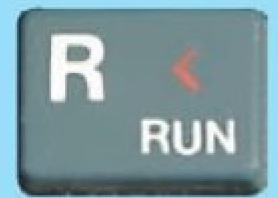


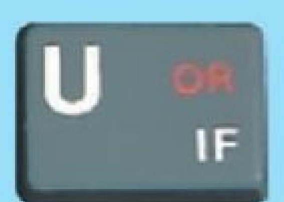








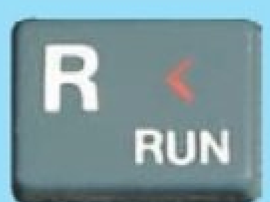


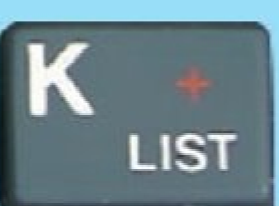






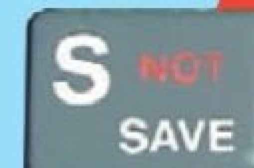


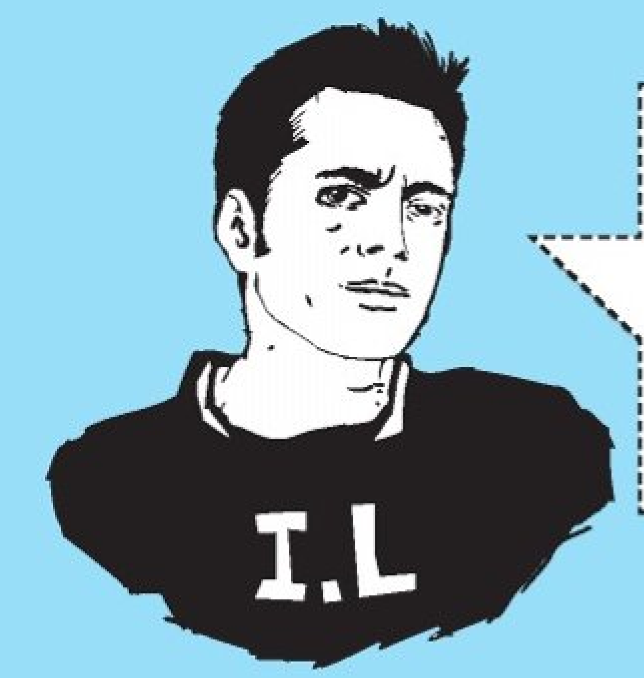












Hi there, my name's **Iain Lee**. You might remember me from Thumb Bandits, The 11 O'Clock Show and Absolute Radio, but now I'm here to confess my love for retro

They don't make 'em like they used to. Or do they?

I recently had the great pleasure of spending a day in the company of a delightful old ZX Spectrum. I was doing some filming for a new videogame channel that will hopefully take off, and my brief was to talk about Sinclair's finest.

I was loaned a 48k machine in fantastic condition by a young chap called Steve, who collects them. I think he said he has eight of them in total. Why you would ever need eight Spectrums is beyond me, but he was so passionate about them – and so generous to me – that I thought it would be rude to ask.

The ZX Spectrum was every schoolboy's number one dream. Well, apart from Kelly LeBrock. She was probably THE number one dream of adolescents around the world. But unlike the star of Eighties teen comedy *Weird Science*, the Spectrum still looks sexy and still works.

With its dainty little rubber keys staring up at me longingly, I wanted to take it right there and then, but I had to be patient, as people were with me. If I was going to 'smash it', to quote the modern parlance of 20th century feminist and all-round good egg Richard Keys, I would have to do so in the privacy of my own bedroom.

I had a fun afternoon flirting with it and playing a bit of *Knight Lore*, but it was all over too soon (as is sadly often the case with me these days), and I had to wrap it up and return it to its rightful owner.

I'm sat here now, looking at my Mac and glancing down at a new laptop I've just bought and wondering why on earth computers these days lack the personality of the old machines. Sure, Apple stuff looks neat and tidy, but how much cooler would it be with rubber keys and an incomprehensible system of inputting data? Okay, forget the last bit, but rubber keys would be awesome. Or the row of red buttons that a BBC had? Or even those tiny, weird keys that made the Oric look so crap?

I heard this week that Commodore is planning to release a new PC, with Windows and all that shizzle on it, but in the body of a C64. Wouldn't that be fantastic? It's going to have an emulator in it as well so you could play all the old games, until your boss comes over – then you hit a switch, and bam; you're looking at European-strength pornography just like everyone else in the office. Much less embarrassing to be caught viewing something borderline illegal than to be found bashing away to *Chuckie Egg*.

I do hope this nostalgic vibe from manufacturers continues. Wouldn't it be great to get iPads that look like a giant Game & Watch? Smart phones that double up as *Mini Munchman*? Laptops that have a battery life of more than one and a half hours? We can but dream, I suppose.

Unlike Kelly LeBrock, the Spectrum still looks sexy and still works

DAYS OF RUNE


» The browser-based *RuneScape* has been entertaining gamers for ten long years. An impressive achievement.

ONLINE MMORPG CELEBRATES 10-YEAR ANNIVERSARY

Fans of the free online multiplayer RPG *RuneScape* may be interested to hear that it's currently celebrating its tenth birthday.

First released in 2001 and created by Jagex Games Studio, the free MMORPG has proven to be extremely popular over the years and, thanks to having over 156 million registered accounts, is currently recognised by Guinness World Records as being the world's most popular free MMORPG.

"We wanted to make a graphical MUD [Multi-User Dungeon]," explained lead designer Mark Ogilvie about *RuneScape*'s early origins. "In those days, most of the MUDs were text-based, so it was the best way to stand out from the crowd. Andrew Gower wanted to make something accessible that he could play from any internet-ready computer, so it had to be fast to download. Paul Gower was always interested in creating fantasy worlds rich with adventure, politics, intrigue and, well, fun! MUD games were very much social experiences, so it had to be somewhere you could make friends and enemies too."


» The original *RuneScape Classic*. Only existing players will be able to visit it.





The gamble proved a good move and *RuneScape* soon struck a chord with those gamers who had been weaned on popular tabletop games or spent their time absorbed in classic fantasy literature. What's interesting is that the developers had also been inspired by those very same sources.

"We took inspiration from early fantasy board games like *Sorcerer's Cave*, traditional *Dungeons & Dragons* tabletop role-playing games and early point-and-click adventure games like *Monkey Island*," confirms Mark. "The writing style definitely took inspiration from authors like Tolkien but also from less traditional angles like Eighties comics, creating a unique game world that beats strongly to this day. These days, our inspiration comes from an ever wider range of angles. We have players all over the world and we are very keen to make sure all of our content and updates are fun and engaging for all of our players, but we still tend to be true to our British roots. Only today I was reading something referencing *Crystal Maze*, *The Princess Bride*, *The Adventure Game* and *Carry On Camping* in the same paragraph!"

It's something of a shame, then, that *RuneScape Classic* is no longer going to be available, as Jagex has revealed that the original game will be closed down. "*RuneScape Classic* has been around for a long time now," explains Mark, "and while there are a multitude of reasons, it feels about the right time to stop opening it to new accounts, as we celebrate our ten-year anniversary this year. We've come an incredibly long way since *RuneScape Classic* and have some really exciting plans for the future, which will propel *RuneScape* even further forward, so it feels only fitting to bring *Classic* to a close. To mark the closure and to recognise players who have experienced *RuneScape Classic*, we have just released 'Classic Capes' for our players. We'll be opening the doors of *RuneScape Classic* one last time this summer so that all of our players can get a glimpse of just how far we've come along. After that, the game worlds themselves will still be kept running but only for those retro few who have ever logged in to *Classic*."

Despite this closure, Mark is keen to stress that big plans are in place for the game's future and that it will be bigger and better than ever before. "This year's being dubbed 'the year of the clans'," he continues. "Players will be given the kind of multi-user support never before seen in any other MMO! We are also concluding our oldest and dearest Mahjarrat storyline this year with the most eagerly awaited quest of all time. *RuneScape*, on celebrating ten years, is going from strength to strength through the loyalty and growth of our players and our world-class teams, making it a truly innovative game." *







Darran



While it will be a shame to no longer play the original classic version of the game, it's good to see that plenty of great content for the future is planned. I might even dust off my old character and take him out for one last game.

Stuart



I must admit that I've never played *RuneScape Classic* before, so it's a shame that I won't be able to check it out, as it looked like a really interesting MMORPG. Once I get some spare time I'll certainly be checking out the update.

David



While it's no *World Of Warcraft*, there's always been something highly satisfying about exploring the world of *RuneScape Classic*, and it will be a pity that no new players will be able to experience it. Still, I'm certainly interested to see how the game world is going to evolve over the next ten years.



>> PAUL DAVIES GIVES HIS VIEWS ON THE RETRO WORLD

Here's my bio…
In 1992 I started out on *Mean Machines Sega* and *Nintendo Magazine System*. In 1995 I became editor of *C&VG*. I led the *C&VG* website from 1998 until Christmas 2000, then I left journalism to be concept design manager at Criterion Games. I returned to journalism in 2002 and from 2005 I've been running my own company, Unlikely Hero.



Hello, retro gamers. My name is **Paul Davies**. I used to be the editor of C&VG and have also worked on a number of classic gaming magazines over the years

Yes, I fancy Princess Zelda

Let's see if I can get to the end of this without using the word majestic. Oh crap.

Well, there is a majesty about *The Legend Of Zelda*, isn't there? I'm never more humbled inside of a videogame than I am in the presence of the princess. I'm rarely more inspired by a hero that we've seen banish evil as both a little boy and strident youth. When I'm standing, waiting to be blessed by the Queen of the Fairies, I get goose bumps. The reason I didn't delete that embarrassing sentence is because it's true. Majesty defines *The Legend Of Zelda*. Gold cartridges – 'nuff said.

Gaming might've lost some of the magic over the years, but whenever Link rides out, even on Game Boy and DS, we're transfixed. It never loses charm.

It is funny how fans have become so close to *Zelda* by now that it almost belongs to us more than it does Nintendo. In the early days, we just received the game like a priceless gift (and it nearly was at £44.99 for *A Link To The Past* in 1991). It was like we'd been given the key to Aladdin's Cave, or a walk-on part in *Tales Of The Arabian Nights* kind of thing. Such adventure with that tremendous musical score; my hair stood on end when I heard the Boston Pops perform the theme.

We all think we know what *Zelda* should be about these days, so we stand with arms crossed each time Nintendo dares to present the latest instalment. Sure there's whooping and wotnot at the E3 announcement, and a hallowed silence during the trailer that appears a million years before the game actually gets released. But, boy, the first time anyone gets their hands on the playable demo it's a race to see who will be the first to point out the things they don't like: 'Oh, not sure about the camera'; 'Oh, I feel like I've done this too many times before'.

Me, I never liked the fairies in *Ocarina Of Time*.

So the *Legend Of Zelda* series represents to me how games were and how they are now. Like, it was all magical and we couldn't believe our eyes and ears in 1986, but by 2006 and *Twilight Princess* everyone had an opinion and a reason to act all grown-up.

Well, you can be like that about it or you can trust Nintendo to treat with respect its most influential series outside of *Mario*. As a journalist, sometimes you worry that blind faith can make you lazy, like it's your duty to start pulling things apart. Occasionally though, it makes more sense to remember how it was when you were perfectly happy to receive and believe.

That's the amazing thing about *Zelda*; it's weird to think of it occupying the same realm as other videogames. And if you think about it, the trick hangs off seeing the world through the hero's eyes, so everything that he encounters feels new like the first time. Even the Hookshot.



Fans have become so close to Zelda that it almost belongs to us more than it does Nintendo





MEGA RPG

WE SPEAK TO SUPER FIGHTER TEAM'S BRANDON COBB ABOUT THE NEW MEGA DRIVE PROJECT, STAR ODYSSEY

Super Fighter Team has already had great success translating obscure Korean Mega Drive titles for a receptive Western audience, and it's just putting the finishing touches to its next project, *Star Odyssey*. We spoke to president Brandon Cobb for the complete lowdown on the new game.

■ Retro Gamer: So how long has *Star Odyssey* taken so far?

Brandon Cobb: From start to finish, the project took under one year to complete. I finished the script over a period of about six months, and the reprogramming process went very smoothly. *Star Odyssey* was slated for release here in the States back in the early Nineties, and even advertised briefly, before ultimately being cancelled. For Super Fighter Team to be the ones responsible for making its release possible after all these years, it's an incredible feeling.

■ RG: How will it differ from your previous Mega Drive games?

BC: Our contract with Starfish-SD marks the first time anyone in the classic gaming market has partnered with a company in Japan. This achievement illustrates just how alive retro gaming truly is, opening the door to future collaborations. *Star Odyssey* is set far in the future, which is a change from our usual medieval-themed RPG adventures. This allowed for a whole different brand of storytelling and humour. The game also features detailed, animated cut-scenes between each chapter of the story, and a large number of different alien races to interact with and recruit party members from.

■ RG: Why are you no longer accepting pre-orders from customers for your products?

BC: We view the pre-order process as unnecessary; there's no reason to make our customers pay for a product they won't actually receive until weeks or months down the line. We've never missed a release deadline and we always strive to produce as many copies of our games as possible, to ensure that anyone within reason that wishes to buy them is given that opportunity.

■ RG: Why do you tend to focus on RPGs?

BC: I'm a writer, and RPG scripts open a lot of possibility for me to explore my craft on a professional level and share the result with people all over the world – and not just those who speak English as a first language. The first time we visited France, for example, I met a customer of ours who told me with a smile that playing through *Beggar Prince* was helping him improve his English. That was a very touching story.

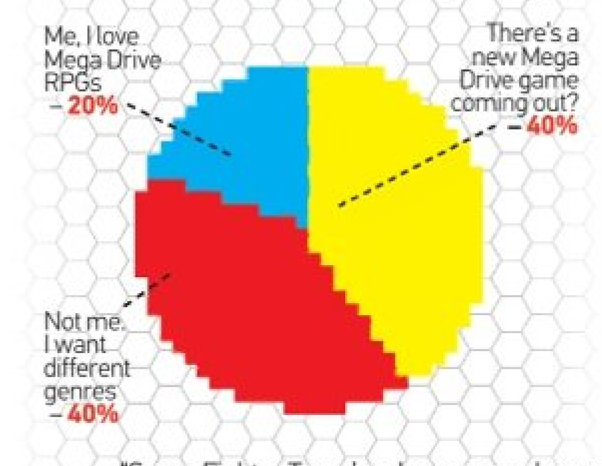
■ RG: How hard is it to negotiate rights to release these games in the West?

BC: For us, it's all about honesty and respect. The companies we partner with appreciate the fact that we make an effort to approach them and negotiate an official agreement, and they know we're serious and sincere. It's not just about money for them, either. We haven't yet dealt with a company that wasn't excited to see one of their games introduced to a whole new, international audience.

***Star Odyssey* will be available very soon. Visit www.starodysseygame.com for more information.**



Who's looking forward to Star Odyssey?

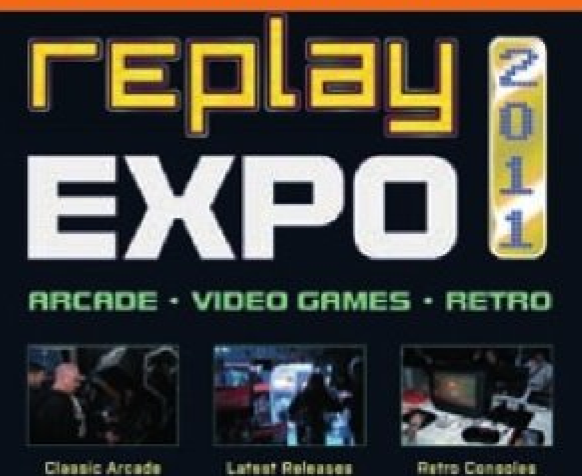


"Super Fighter Team's releases are always something I look forward to. Whether the game is any good or not, it's great being able to put a new release onto the Mega Drive shelf once more" **– Cauterize**

"It's actually the first I've heard of it. But since I bought *Pier Solar* I'd be happy to get this when it comes out too" **– ShadowNeku**

MICROBYTES

Snippets of news from the exciting world of retro



>> R3PLAY returns

Last year's massive retro event, R3PLAY, will be returning later this year. Held in the same Blackpool location as last year and taking place across 5 and 6 November, it promises to be even bigger and better. There's no news on special guest stars who will be in attendance yet, but **Retro Gamer** will be there to cover everything as it happens. More news next month, as soon as we have some confirmation.



>> Look into my eye

Fans of *Catchphrase* and retro gaming will be pleased to hear that a brand new update has just been released for iOS game *Say What You See: The Collection*. Similar in style to the hit Eighties panel show, you're presented with cool 8-bit-styled drawings and must work out what classic arcade games they are referring to. Download it now from the App Store.



>> More Street Fighting

At its recent Captivate event, Capcom announced the release of *Super Street Fighter IV: Arcade Edition*. Previously only available in Japanese arcades, the PS3, PC and Xbox 360 releases will feature all previous characters along with brothers Yun and Yang, Evil Ryu and Oni. The rebalanced brawler will be available online for a bargainous 1,200 Points and will also receive a retail release at the beginning of June.

THE VAULT

TREASURES FROM THE RETRO CHEST

TREASURE OF THE MONTH



Power Glove T-Shirt

■ **RRP:** £26.99

■ **Buy it from:** www.truffleshuffle.co.uk

It's rare that we select T-Shirts to feature as a treasure. We've nothing against them; it's just they are, after all, just T-Shirts, and T-Shirts are basically just wearable, fabric, cylindrical, capital letter tees with advertising splashed on them. This one, however, which somehow manages to make Mattel's Power Glove look even more Eighties than it already does, instantly caught our eye this month. And while it isn't something that we'd ever be caught seen wearing ourselves – you have to be a special kind of person to want to promote and openly express your love of an ambitious peripheral that was about as effective at steering avatars in videogames as a bionic cow tongue – we can appreciate the idea and quality of its execution. And does anyone else think the space background shows up the device for looking like a dismembered astronaut's hand?

Sega Arcade Nano Keychain

■ **RRP:** £12.99

■ **Buy it from:** www.firebox.com

The Nomad was Sega's first attempt at creating a portable Mega Drive, one designed to fit inside pockets the size of Winklepicker shoes. Many years later we arrive at the present day, and the developer is at it again with these mini battery-powered MD units – but one so tiny it can be attached to keys and be comfortably operated by most rodents. Available in two flavours, with each a dedicated console containing a different selection of five Mega Drive games plus five mini-games, the only flaw appears to be that you have to carry the AV lead around with you at all times.

8-Bit Academy T-Shirt

■ **RRP:** £14.95

■ **Buy it from:** www.retrogt.com

If 'Team NES' isn't the group for you then you may wish to enlist in the 8-Bit Academy instead, which, from the look of this T-Shirt, appears to be some kind of shooting club – much like the one seen in the hilarious action comedy *Beverly Hills Cop 2*, starring Judge Reinhold. Taking clear inspiration from the NES Classic – and self explanatory titled – *Duck Hunt*, the shirt features a striking insignia comprising crossed NES Zappers, one of the eponymous feathered targets, and it's lovingly finished off with a non-feathered target as well.

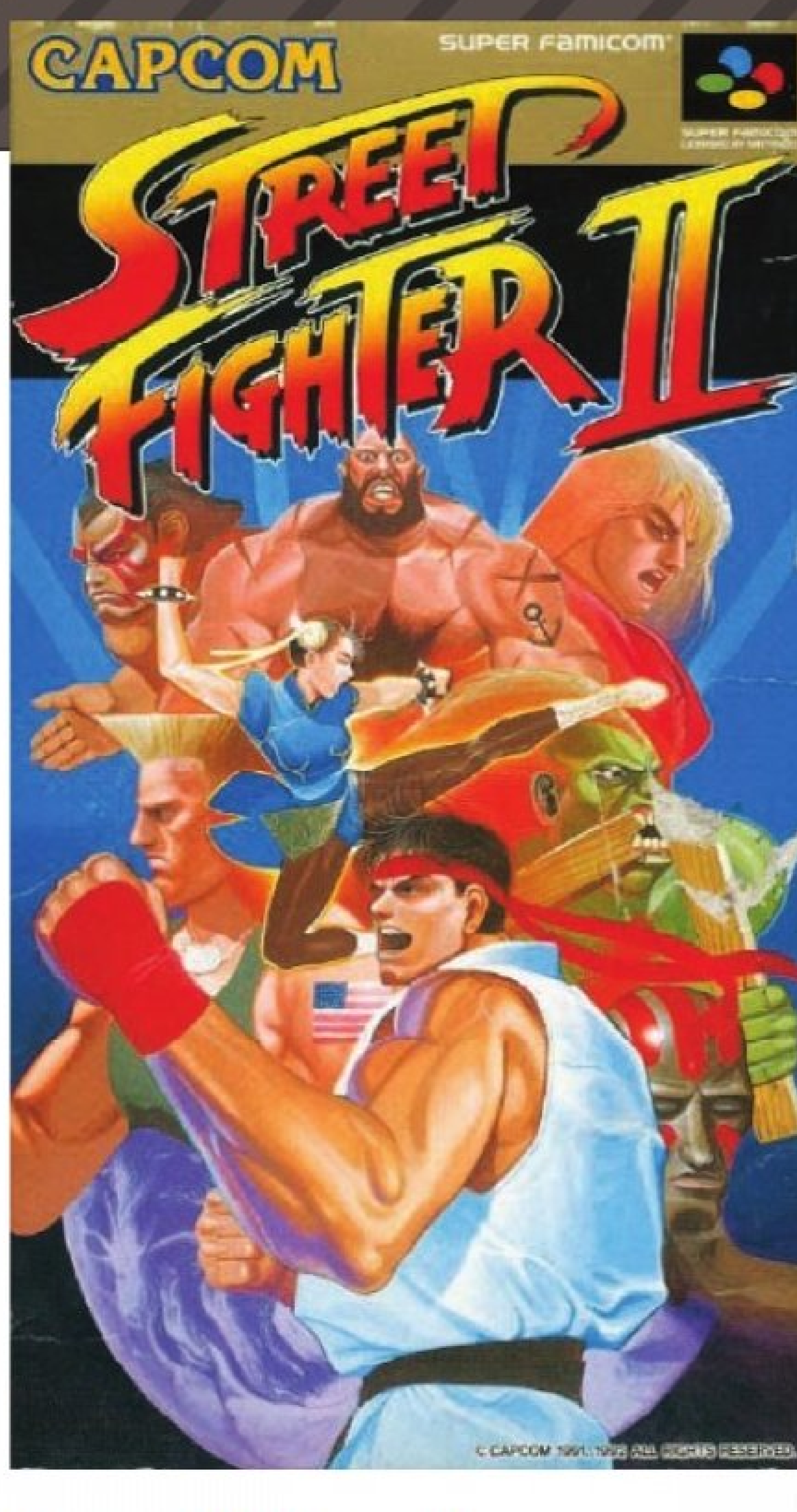
Sega Nomad Modification

■ **RRP:** £25

■ **Buy it from:** www.consolepassion.co.uk

Alternatively, if you do own a Nomad then you may like to get the console fully modified so it can play games from any region. Console Passion offers the service. Its full mod package adds a language switch to the handheld, widens the cartridge slot to fit Japanese cartridges, and adds a toggle switch to turn the display from 60Hz to 50Hz, allowing for nippier, full-screen gaming. The company also offers a premium switchless modification on the Nomad for £40.





Street Fighter II

- **RRP:** £7.95
- **Buy it from:** www.retro-play.co.uk

If last month's *Street Fighter II* feature was the first you heard of the game, and so are now left with an urge to experience this hadokening and bird-kicking malarkey for yourself, you may want to pay a visit to Retro-Play, which is currently selling the original SNES game. It's the cool name-swapping Japanese version too, in which M. Bison is named Vega, Vega is called Balrog, and Balrog goes by the name M. Bison. Incidentally, in Japan this magazine goes by the name **Sci-Fi Now**. True fact.

Team NES hoodie

- **RRP:** $39.99 (approx £25)
- **But it from:** www.thinkgeek.com

Normally we wouldn't condone the wearing of hoodies. We're not getting belligerent and grumpy with our advancing years, nor do we share the mono-minded standpoint that the garment is usually the costume of choice for shoplifters and low-level grassroots gang members. We just think a sweatshirt and balaclava combo looks so much trendier. So we had a real dilemma on our hands this month when we spotted this natty Nintendo-themed hooded sweatshirt on ThinkGeek. Seriously, what's a retro fashion specialist to do?





Tom And Jerry: Frantic Antics

- **RRP:** £59.99
- **Buy it from:** www.genkivideogames.com

Genki is an online import gaming specialist with a penchant for Japanese games. So if you're looking for a particular Japanese import it's a great place to start your search. Of all the new arrivals to hit the website this month, it was this Japanese *Tom And Jerry* Mega Drive game (released with the suffix *Frantic Antics* over here) that caught our eye. Obscure Japanese games of cat and mouse do seem to come at a tall price, though. This one here will set you back a princely £59.99.

TOP FIVE T-SHIRTS



01 Beheaded T-shirt
- **RRP:** $24 (approx £16)
- **Manufacturer:** Meat Bun
- **Buy it from:** meatbun.us/store/

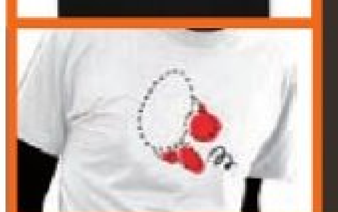


02 Amstrad
- **RRP:** £14.95
- **Manufacturer:** Retro GT
- **Buy it from:** www.retrogt.com



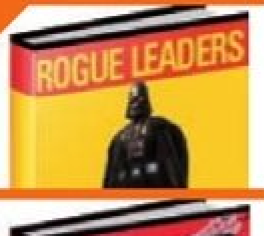
03 Sonic Power-ups
- **RRP:** $14.95 (approx £10)
- **Manufacturer:** Retro GT
- **Buy it from:** www.retrogt.com

04 Coexist T-shirt
- **RRP:** $15.99 - $17.99
- **Manufacturer:** Thinkgeek.com
- **Buy it from:** www.thinkgeek.com



05 Dizzy
- **RRP:** £14.95
- **Manufacturer:** Retro GT
- **Buy it from:** www.retrogt.com

TOP FIVE BOOKS



01 Rogue Leaders: The Story Of LucasArts
- **RRP:** £34.99 ■ **Publisher:** Titan Books
- **Buy it from:** www.amazon.co.uk



02 Classic Home Video Games 1985-1988 ■ **RRP:** $55 (approx £34)
- **Author:** Brett Weiss
- **Buy it from:** www.amazon.com



03 Racing The Beam
- **RRP:** £14.95
- **Publisher:** MIT Press
- **Buy it from:** www.amazon.co.uk



04 Game Over
- **RRP:** £22.14
- **Publisher:** Cyberactive Media Group
- **Buy it from:** www.amazon.co.uk



05 Gamespite Quarterly: Issue 3
- **RRP:** From $12 ■ **Author:** Jeremy Parish
- **Buy it from:** www.gamespite.com

TOP FIVE MISCELLANEOUS

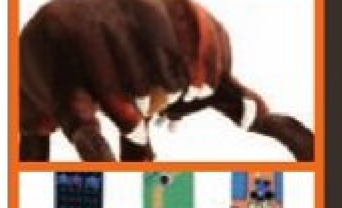
01 Mega Drive Card Holder
- **RRP:** $34.10 (approx £21)
- **Manufacturer:** Banpresto
- **Buy it from:** www.strapya-world.com



02 Grow Your Own Moai Statue (aka DOH)
- **RRP:** $5.99 (£4)
- **Buy it from:** www.thinkgeek.com



03 Retro Videogame Propaganda Posters
- **RRP:** £33 ■ **Manufacturer:** Steven Thomas ■ **Buy it from:** www.thinkgeek.com



04 Headcrab Plushie
- **RRP:** $24.99 (approx £16)
- **Manufacturer:** Unknown
- **Buy it from:** www.thinkgeek.com



05 Namco Dioramas
- **RRP:** £5
- **Manufacturer:** Namco
- **Buy it from:** www.japantrendshop.com



*A MOMENT WITH...
Shaun Southern

Each issue, we put an industry veteran in the hot seat. This month, we chat to Shaun Southern, co-creator of the Lotus series

Who is Shaun Southern?

Shaun started writing games in 1983, notably for Mastertronic and Gremlin, where he created 8-bit hits *Kikstart* and *Trailblazer*. Later work for Gremlin included *Super Cars* and the *Lotus* series. After a subsequent stint at Warthog, he co-founded Team 3 Games.

Which of your games would you recommend to our readers?
I think of *Lotus 2* as a rounded, polished game and the best we – Magnetic Fields – did for the Amiga. It had simple, intuitive controls, unique levels, looked great, and you always wanted one more go. A lot of people prefer the original *Lotus*, and it was a big decision to change the laps for checkpoints, but I'm glad we did. As for newer stuff, whatever's next! We may even see *Trailblazer* on the 3DS; it's up and running and looks amazing.

How would you like your games to be remembered?
Fast, fun and addictive. Many games don't stand up against today's offerings because they were limited by hardware, but ours don't need today's hardware to be fun. I've heard the term 'twitchy' applied to a lot of our games. I'm not sure if it's always a compliment, but I like the idea – it builds tension and makes you want to get better.

What's the most difficult thing you've encountered while working on a game?
While working on *Lotus* for the Atari, we couldn't get the computers to sync up and play in serial link mode. I was there at 4am with an oscilloscope, trying to work out why the data was getting corrupted. In the end, it turned out I'd missed out one subroutine call in the initialisation code.



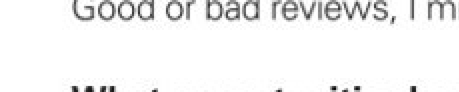
Which industry veteran do you admire the most?
I liked Jeff Minter's games. I'd actually play them, which is something for me!

Which games do you wish you'd made?
Attack and *Revenge Of The Mutant Camels*. They were so crazy and fun, and yet you really felt in control. They made our games look totally uninspired.

What are your darkest memories of the videogame industry?
The times you get ripped off. You have to be careful that the people who will be paying your royalties still need something from you, otherwise they'll do anything to get out of paying. One day, our boss parked his car in the company's driveway and refused to leave until we were paid.

And your best?
Hopefully it's still to come, but there were a few years in the early Nineties when we were constantly waiting for magazines to come out with reviews in and everybody seemed to love our games. Our games are now so low-profile in comparison that they don't even get reviewed in magazines. Good or bad reviews, I miss them!

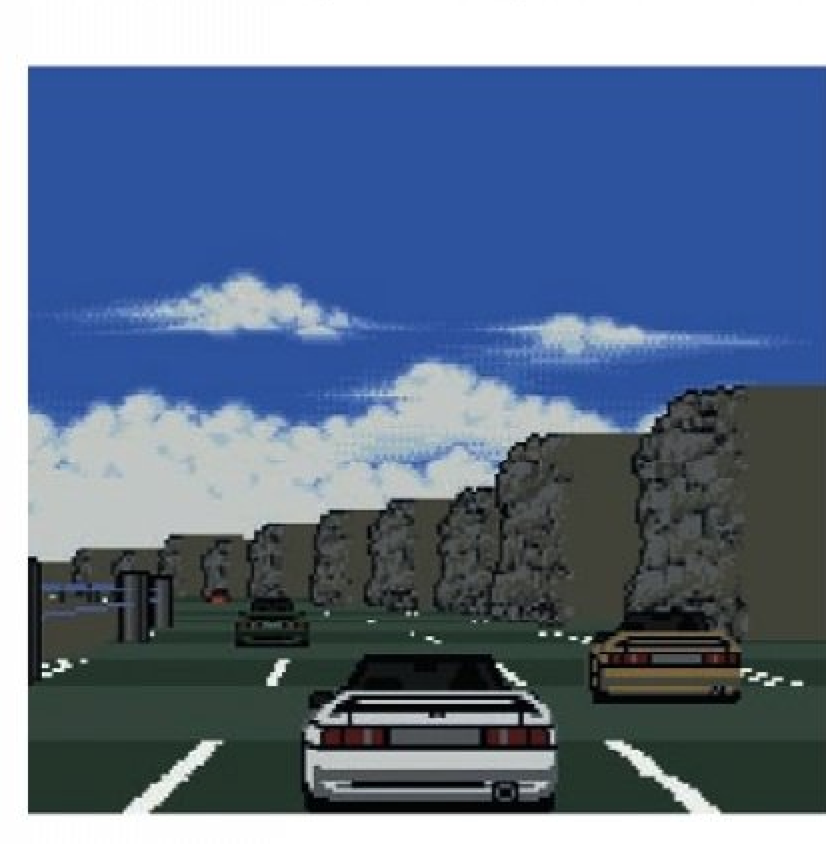
» [C64] The fab split-screen *Kikstart 2* for the C64 still plays well today.



What opportunities has working in the videogame industry given you?
I've been able to enjoy my work. Every day is different – fun, challenging, maybe even infuriating, but never boring. It's great being able to create something, even if it's just code, and getting a game mastered and out there is still a great feeling.

How has the industry changed in the last 30 years?
A lot of games are now designed by committee. There are too many sequels and licences. Imagine someone pitching *Revenge Of The Mutant Camels* now. 'You want to do a game with a giant WHAT? How can I stick a licence on that?' 'Tone those colours down – they're not realistic!'

Can you share an interesting anecdote from your time in the industry?
I remember meeting a boss from Gremlin in his local pub one evening. I was with a friend who was helping us test a game and I said we might be a little early. The guy from Gremlin said: 'No problem – have a drink and put it on my tab!' We got there when the pub opened at noon. By the time the Gremlin guy arrived, we were totally drunk and he had a huge bill. Luckily, he didn't moan – much! *





retrodiary

27 May - 23 June

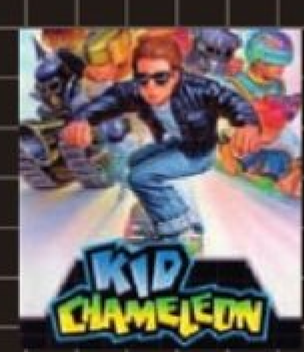
>> A month of retro events both past and present



27 May 1982
Grundy Business Systems releases the NewBrain. Intended to bridge the gap between business and home use, it did neither and bombed.



27 May 1985
Capcom releases its latest arcade coin-op game, the run-and-gun classic *Commando*.



28 May 1992
The slick platform game *Kid Chameleon* (along with all his masked alter-egos) is released in the UK on the Mega Drive.



30 May 1983
IRM Corporation and Japan Capsule Company Co Ltd joined together and form the games developer/publisher Capcom.



30 May 1991
The first incarnation of PopCap Games ever-popular puzzle game *Bejeweled* is released on PC.



1 June 1955
Nakamura Marketing is formed and later becomes Japanese gaming giant Namco.



1 June 1984
A new coin-op game, *Mario Bros.*, starring an Italian moustachioed plumber, is released in the arcades.



1 June 2007
Lara Croft Tomb Raider: Anniversary is released in Europe on the PS2. *Ashes To Ashes* actress Keeley Hawes voices Lara.



3 June 1982
The first *Donkey Kong* Game & Watch game is released. The twin-screen orange-cased game sells by the barrel load.



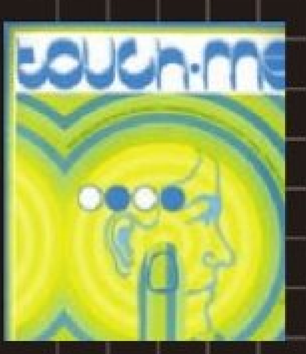
5 June 1989
The god game *Populous*, developed by Bullfrog, is released by Electronic Arts on the Amiga and Atari ST.



7-9 June 2011
The three-day Electronic Entertainment Expo – commonly known as E3 – takes place in Los Angeles Convention Centre.



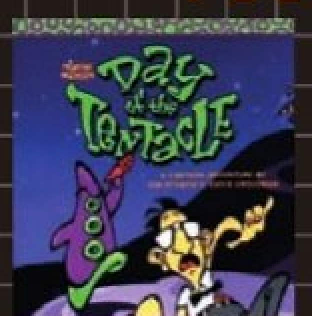
10 June 1958
Yu Suzuki, creator of many of Sega's most revered coin-op classics including *OutRun, Space Harrier* and *After Burner*, is born.



11 June 1974
Atari releases the dubiously titled arcade game *Touch Me*, a *Simon*-like game that inspired the more successful and well known tabletop game.



12 June 2008
Konami's superb *Metal Gear Solid 4: Guns Of The Patriots* is released worldwide on the PS3.



14 June 1993
LucasArts releases probably its finest graphic adventure, *Day Of The Tentacle*, the sequel to *Maniac Mansion*, on PC.



17 June 2005
Medal Of Honor: European Assault is released on PS2, Xbox and GameCube in the UK and Europe.



22 June 1979
Infocom, the creators of the *Leather Goddesses Of Phobos* and *Zork* classic adventure series, is formed.



23 June 1983
Load Runner, Britain's first computer comic, was launched. It lasted just thirteen issues.



23 June 1991
Sonic makes his debut game appearance with the simultaneous UK and US releases of the original *Sonic The Hedgehog* on the Sega Mega Drive/Genesis.



23 June 2011
The new of **Retro Gamer** goes on sale.



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BACK TO THE EIGHTIES



» [Amiga] *Power Drift* was disappointing on the Amiga yet it was still more palatable than many *OutRun* conversions.

CHARTS

AUGUST 1989

COMMODORE 64

1	RoboCop (Ocean)
2	Emlyn Hughes Soccer (Audiogenic)
3	Dragon Ninja (Ocean)
4	Turbo Esprit (Encore)
5	League Challenge (Atlantis)

» [Spectrum] The graphics might not be 16-bit standard but the speed, atmosphere and depth more than compensate.



THE LATEST NEWS FROM AUGUST 1989

AUGUST 1989 – Freddy is fiendish, Uridium is The Last Starfighter, Atari Lynx takes on Game Boy, Ocean tells a New Zealand Story, Activision suffers a Power Drift while Rainbird goes Stargliding. Richard Burton gets into beam destruction mode…

Mindscape got the ball rolling this month by announcing the imminent release of *Fiendish Freddy's Big Top O' Fun,* which unusually saw it released on the Amiga and Atari ST before the 8-bit systems were catered for.

Fiendish Freddy somewhat rejuvenated the tired genre of sporting event games by introducing some splendidly bizarre events laden with great graphics and a goodly dollop of humour. The freaky-looking judging panel particularly stood out…

While competing, there was the added hindrance of Freddy himself, who attempts to hamper your skills on such events as the high dive, human cannonball and knife throwing. The premise of the game was you had to raise $10,000 by being successful at these acts, which would then stop the circus from being closed down.

Mindscape had further news, this time on an old classic. Hewson's C64 shoot-'em-up favourite *Uridium* was going to grace the NES console in the coming months, and Mindscape would be doing the coding.

Development was well under way, it looked faithful to the C64 original, and a mid-1990 release date was set. It then disappeared off the gaming radar. Later Mindscape revealed that it had obtained a licence to develop a game based on the 1984 sci-fi movie, *The Last Starfighter.*

With *Uridium* completed but unreleased and a movie licence finalised, it didn't take long for Mindscape to realise that cannibalising its existing game rather than producing something new from scratch would make financial sense. So after a spot of sprite changing and a new soundtrack, *Uridium* became *The Last Starfighter* for the NES. Thankfully, the level design and gameplay remained indistinguishable from the Commodore 64 game, which meant it played just fine…

MicroProse's new budget label, Microstyle, was set to release an eco-friendly, save-the-planet game based on real Greenpeace campaigns. *Rainbow Warriors* would address issues such as acid rain, ozone depletion and radioactive waste. As significant as those are, it resulted in the game having an overbearing whiff of preachy self-importance. The game and its sub-levels were okay, but the product was all about the message rather than playability, leaving Amiga, Atari ST and C64 owners underwhelmed by it all.

Nintendo may have been making all the early running in the handheld stakes, but Atari began its retaliation with reports filtering back from the latest Consumer Electronics Show held in Chicago of a new Atari handheld, which could pose a threat to Nintendo's Game Boy dominance.

The Atari Portable Color Entertainment System, later renamed the Atari Lynx, would be the first handheld to utilise a full-colour 3.5-inch LCD screen. It originally started out as a



» [Atari ST] Greenpeace and videogaming blended together to create a mish mash of mush. Well meaning but tosh.



» [Spectrum] Ocean was the master of cute coin-op conversions and it excelled once again with *The New Zealand Story.*



AMSTRAD

1. Fast Food (Codemasters)
2. RoboCop (Ocean)
3. Twin Turbo V8 (Codemasters)
4. Treasure Island Dizzy (Codemasters)
5. Turbo Esprit (Encore)

SPECTRUM

1. Treasure Island Dizzy (Codemasters)
2. MicroProse Soccer (MicroProse)
3. RoboCop (Ocean)
4. Fast Food (Codemasters)
5. Cup Football (D&H Games)

MUSIC

1. Swing The Mood (Jive Bunny & The Mastermixers)
2. Poison (Alice Cooper)
3. French Kiss (Lil Louis)
4. Wouldn't Change A Thing (Kylie Minogue)
5. Ride On Time (Black Box)

AUGUST 1989 NEWS

18 August saw Manchester United 'sold' for £20 million when property tycoon Michael Knighton bought the club for a then-record fee. He celebrated the takeover by appearing at Old Trafford before a game, dressed in a full United strip and showing off his football skills with a series of keepy-ups and headers.

Sadly for Knighton, the deal collapsed after his financial backers pulled out in what could have been a sublime piece of business. American business tycoon Malcolm Glazer reportedly paid £790 million for Manchester United in 2005. With recent rumours of another takeover valuing the club at £1.5 billion, Knighton's original backers must be truly sick as a parrot…

On 20 August the Marchioness, a pleasure boat hired for a private birthday party, and a dredger, the Bowbelle, collided on the River Thames. The pleasure boat was sunk by the 2,000-ton barge, resulting in the deaths of 51 partygoers. The time from first impact to the Marchioness becoming completely submerged was just 30 seconds.

» Voyager 2 will pass within four light years of Sirius in just 296,000 years.

Voyager 2 sent back the first close-up pictures of the planet Neptune on 25 August. The Voyager 2 mission was only expected to last five years and the primary goals were to fly by and photograph Jupiter and Saturn. Launched on 20 August 1977, Voyager 2 is still functioning 33 years later and still taking and transmitting measurements. It's now over 8.8 billion miles from our sun – Neptune is 2 billion miles away – and travelling at 35,000 miles per hour.

development project by software developer Epyx in 1986, resulting in a finished product in 1987. However, Epyx found itself in financial difficulties and was forced to find a business partner. Atari stepped in with the financial clout to handle marketing and production, leaving Epyx free to continue software development for the joint venture.

The Atari Lynx went on sale in the USA in September, and although it was an attractive system, albeit somewhat bulkier than the Game Boy, it was twice the price at $179.99. Despite its technological superiority the Lynx never made inroads into Nintendo's market share. While the Game Boy was being advertised and sold virtually everywhere in the race for Christmas sales, Atari struggled badly with distribution problems and never really posed a threat from there on…

Ocean Software, which was still developing Taito's *Rainbow Islands*, found time to release another cutesy Taito coin-op offering, *The New Zealand Story*. Surely Ocean couldn't make another game as playable as *Bubble Bobble* and as attractive as *Rainbow Islands*? Well, yes it could actually… Whether you were an Amstrad, ST or Spectrum owner, you couldn't help but love *The New Zealand Story*.

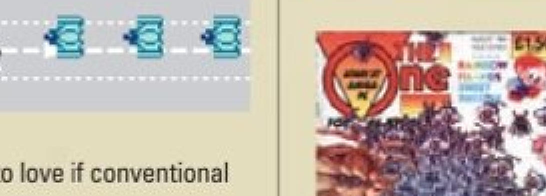
Ocean's other big release was *Batman: The Movie*, the game of the movie that was also released in UK cinemas this month. Having had great success with its two previous *Batman* games, Ocean looked set to have a third success. Indeed, when *Batman* was released just before Christmas, it received rave reviews. The varied levels, tight learning curve and some wonderful graphics and sound made it one of the best movie tie-ins on the home micros.

Another anticipated coin-op nearing the end of its development was Sega's *Power Drift*. The racer, developed by Activision, was due for release before Christmas, and previews of the 8-bit versions looked to be everything that US Gold hadn't managed with *OutRun*. Sadly the ST and Amiga versions failed to live up to the graphically inferior Spectrum and C64 efforts.

Starglider 2 was a critical success for Rainbird on the Amiga and ST, so it would be interesting to see how the conversion of the superb, immersive shoot-'em-up with textured graphics would transfer to the ageing Sinclair Spectrum. When Rainbird released the Spectrum version this month, vector graphics had understandably replaced the textured variety. More importantly, the Spectrum version was terrific, losing nothing of its playability through conversion.

Long-running multiformat magazine *Computer & Video Games* prodded and poked at the latest crop of games releases and decided that *Shinobi* (Virgin/Mastertronic, C64), *Licence To Kill* (Domark, Atari ST), *Indiana Jones And The Last Crusade* (US Gold, Amiga), *Kult* (Infogrames, Atari ST), *Bloodwych* (Mirrorsoft, Amiga), *Mr Heli* (Firebird, Amstrad), *Citadel* (Electric Dreams, C64), *Conflict In Europe* (Mirrorsoft, Amiga), *Stunt Car Racer* (MicroProse, Atari ST), *Personal Nightmare* (Horrorsoft, Atari ST), *Spellcaster* (Sega, Master System) and *Ghostbusters* (Sega, Master System) were among the titles that you should be throwing your wonga at.

» [NES] It looks like *Uridium*, tastes like *Uridium* but isn't *Uridium*. It's *The Last Starfighter*, aka *Uridium*.



» [Amiga] *Fiendish Freddy* was a game to love if conventional sporting games left you cold.



THIS MONTH IN…

AMIGA FORMAT

The first issue of the new Future mag compared two eagerly awaited top-down football games: *Kick Off* and *MicroProse Soccer*. Both promised much and looked similar, but did either dribble to victory? *Kick Off* romped home in the comparison.



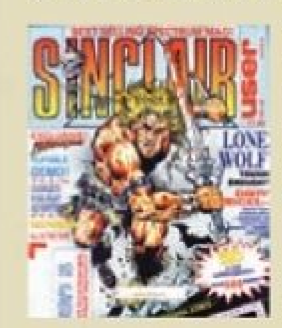
THE ONE



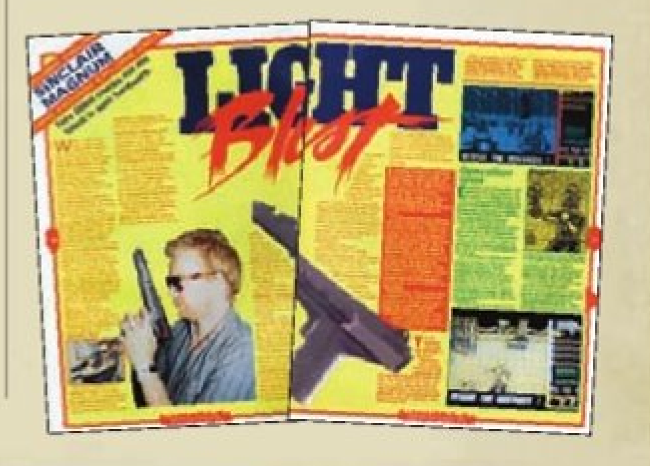
The One featured a fascinating four-page interview with Dave Gibbons, comic artist and one third of the team behind the seminal *Watchmen* graphic novel. Dave talked about the possibility of a movie and his love of playing around with DPaint on his Amiga.



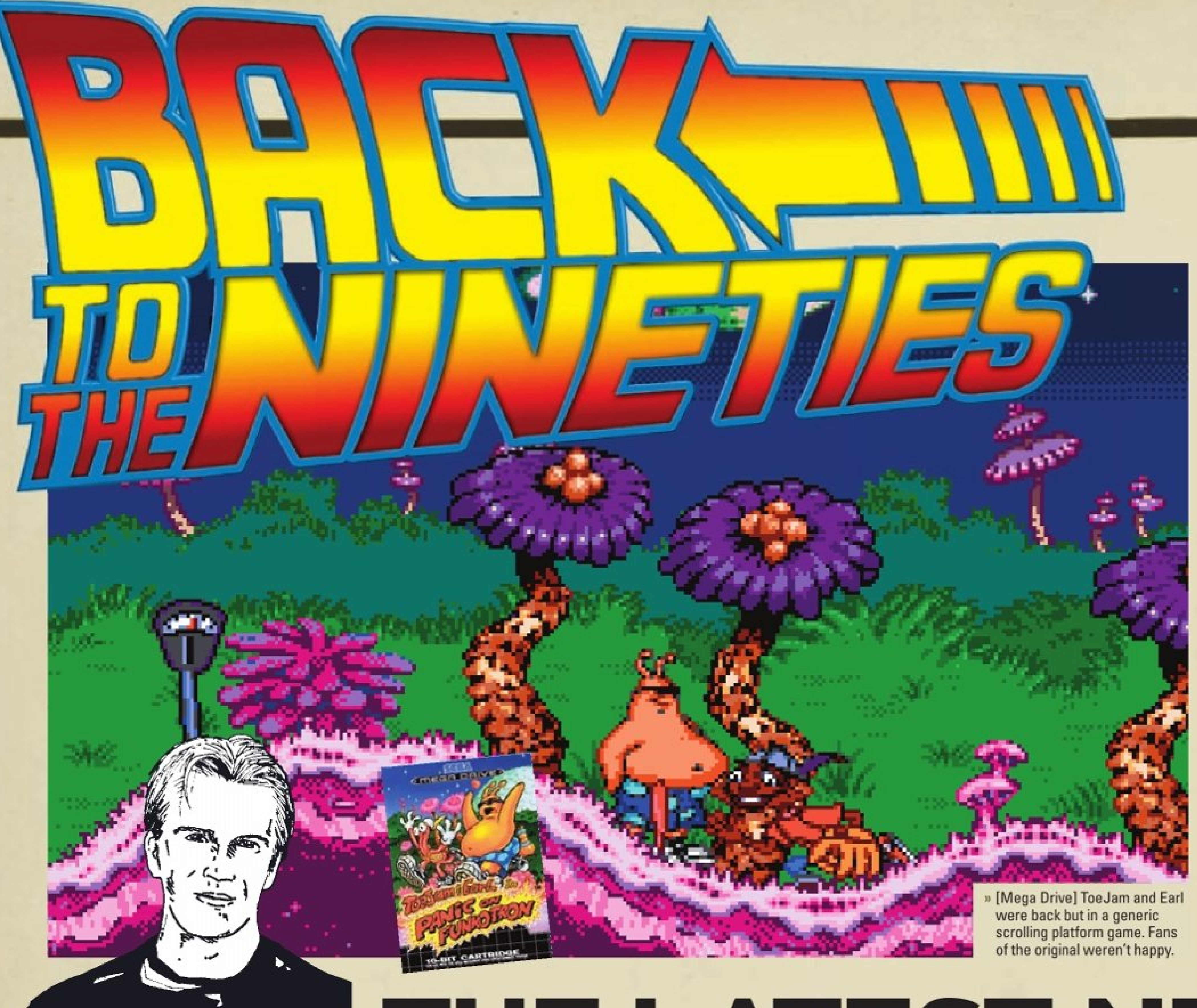
SINCLAIR USER



The Sinclair Magnum was road-tested on *Operation Wolf* and *Bullseye*, with opinion decidedly mixed. It seemed the Magnum was destined to be something you might purchase but never really fully use.



BACK TO THE NINETIES



» [Mega Drive] ToeJam and Earl were back but in a generic scrolling platform game. Fans of the original weren't happy.



» [SNES] Multiplayer gaming at its best – the magnificent *Super Bomberman*.



» [SNES] *Mortal Kombat II* introduced us to some new fearsome female fighters…

THE LATEST NEWS FROM JANUARY 1994

JANUARY 1994 – Mysterious Commodore 65 uncovered, Squaresoft offers Mana from heaven, MK II offers you head removal, Starwing 2 in limbo, ToeJam and Earl return while Sensible Soccer kicks arse. Richard Burton wonders who ate all the pies…

Happy new year.

The Commodore 64 and Amiga were both great, but what if a missing link between the two had been launched? Reports of the fabled Commodore 65 – or C64DX, to give its other name – had been rife for years, and this month some UK magazines unearthed interesting news about it.

Commodore had been developing the C65 since 1989, with the project reportedly cancelled in 1991, presumably with the success of the Amiga. Occasional sightings of the machine popped up intermittently, usually prototypes, but it wasn't until Commodore went bankrupt that a stash of around 500 machines was bought by a company called Grapevine during a Commodore warehouse clearance auction, and these were then sold at other auctions and in the open market. It appears the C65 went into production a couple of weeks before Commodore died…

The computer itself looked Amiga-esque in style and had a 3.5-inch disk drive with a custom 6502 CPU, two SID chips and 128K RAM, but was still a true 8-bit computer. Although it was a greatly improved version of the C64, it would also have more in common with the Amiga while retaining backwards compatibility. Sadly, 8-bit micros had had their day and Commodore had missed the boat, which was a shame as the C65 looked terrific.

Japanese and American SNES gamers may have had the game available for a few months already, but Europe was still waiting on Squaresoft to release the European edition of *Secret Of Mana*, the highly rated RPG. With its pretty graphics and *Zelda*-styled top-down view, *Secret Of Mana* also had the unusual option of simultaneous three-player mode, albeit with the addition of a multitap accessory.

When it finally reached UK shores in November, *Secret Of Mana* was already highly regarded and guaranteed classic status. Magazine reviews just confirmed what everyone already knew – buy it.

There was good news from Midway that its *Mortal Kombat II* coin-op, just released in November '93, would be making the jump to consoles. With the first *Mortal Kombat* game having been in circulation for a while but still selling extremely well, the decision to create a sequel was hardly a leap of faith.

Mortal Kombat II would introduce several new characters with a strong female presence – that of Kitana and her toothy clone, Mileena. Mega Drive, SNES, Game Boy and Amiga owners could expect it to appear in the late summer. It was deemed an improvement over the original release, with the SNES version considered to be definitive.

Argonaut and Nintendo were to once again team up to bring us a SNES sequel to the polygon-filled world of *Starwing/Star Fox*. The adventures of Fox McCloud



» [Amiga] The consoles were getting their first taste of *Sensible Soccer*, but nothing would touch the Amiga original.



» [SNES] *Starwing/Star Fox 2* was everything fans of the original game wanted… except released…

JANUARY 1994 NEWS

6 January saw the rare combination of intrigue and ice-skating when Nancy Kerrigan, an American figure skater, was attacked at the US Ladies Figure Skating Championship finals. She was clubbed across the knee during a practice session, causing severe bruising and her withdrawal from Olympic qualification.

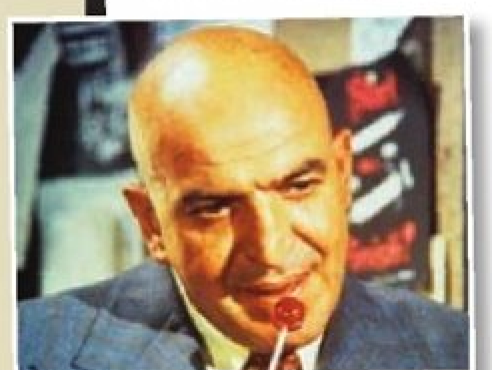
Tonya Harding, fellow Olympic contender, won the event but was later investigated by police for her involvement in the attack. It transpired that she had planned the attack with her former husband and bodyguard.

An earthquake devastated parts of Los Angeles on 17 January. The quake measured 6.6 on the Richter scale and caused widespread damage. Approximately 5,000 buildings were damaged and deemed unsafe, while 60 people were killed. The low death toll was attributed to the quake hitting at 4:30am. Exactly one year later, a 7.0 earthquake struck Kobe in Japan, killing 6,000 people…

1 January was not a happy new year for Cesar Romero. The actor, most famous for his role as the Joker in the *Batman* TV series of the Sixties, died of pneumonia at the age of 86.

Another star of television who also passed away was Aristotelis 'Telly' Savalas, a day after his 72nd birthday, due to prostate cancer. Savalas starred in the war movies *The Dirty Dozen* and *Kelly's Heroes* but was most recognisable in his role as the bald, lollipop-sucking police lieutenant, Theo Kojak.

» Cesar Romero refused to shave his moustache off, so it was covered with white make-up.



» Who loves ya, baby?

and his team once again revolved around defeating Andross, protecting Corneria and the Lylat System, and battling secondary villains in the Star Wolf team.

The game promised to be much larger than the original and had done away with the linear missions, offering a much more free-flowing, exploratory game. It all sounded very good indeed, and with the Japanese version of *Star Fox 2* all but complete it wouldn't be too long before it would be available. At least that's what everyone thought…

Nintendo decided to hold it back with a view to showcasing it on its new console, which would become the Nintendo 64, rather than releasing it on the SNES. So despite the code being nearly finished and the Nintendo 64 more than two and a half years away, *Star Fox 2* was shelved and never released.

One hotly anticipated title that did get released this month was *Sensible Soccer* on the SNES and Mega Drive. With the king of football games planted in Amiga gaming history, it was time for the transition to consoles… but how would it fare?

Thankfully for all concerned, it played an absolute blinder.

» [SNES] A top-drawer Squaresoft title combining eye candy graphics with meaty RPG gameplay, and all in real-time.

The gameplay and addictive qualities of the Amiga version remained, and although graphically better football games have been released over the years, *Sensible Soccer* remains a firm favourite and arguably the greatest football game ever.

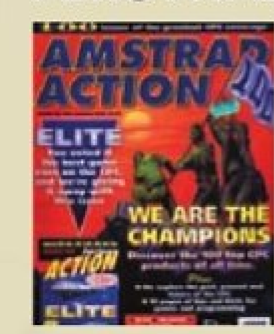
The alien rappers are back with the Mega Drive release of *ToeJam & Earl In Panic On Funkotron*. The almost cultish following for the first *ToeJam* game meant anticipation was high for the new one, which saw the two alien heroes back on their home planet of Funkotron after escaping Earth in the first game. Unfortunately, human stowaways came along for the ride and are roaming Funkotron. ToeJam and Earl's task is to collect them all, pop them in a jar and send them back whence they came.

ToeJam 2 was very well-received despite deviating from the winning formula of the original. It was a typical side-scrolling platform game rather than a free-roaming treasure hunt, well-executed and playable but missing the magic of their debut. While the magazines of the time raved about the game and all its audio and visual loveliness, the really critical people were the fans of the first *ToeJam & Earl* game, who were disappointed in the change of style.

Super Play poked and prodded the latest SNES releases and thoughtfully let us know that *Aladdin* (Capcom), *Macross* (Zamuse), *Flashback* (Sony/Delphine), *Alfred Chicken* (Mindscape), *Secret Of Mana* (Squaresoft), *Sensible Soccer* (Sony), *Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles: Tournament Fighters* (Konami), *F1 Pole Position* (Ubisoft), *The Legend Of The Mystical Ninja* (Konami) and *Super Bomberman* (Sony) were all golden nuggets of gaming brilliance. To be fair, most were…

THIS MONTH IN…

AMSTRAD ACTION



Future Publishing's first ever magazine was celebrating its 100th issue. With such a landmark reached, it was only fitting that it gave away a landmark game on the cover tape: *Elite*. 17 issues later *AA* finally succumbed, with its pamphlet-like page count of 24.



SEGA FORCE MEGA



The polar opposite of *Amstrad Action* was Impact Magazines' *Sega Force Mega*, which concentrated on all things Mega Drive. After seven glorious issues the magazine was pulled. Not so much because of the content but due to the parent company going pear-shaped.



SNES FORCE MEGA



The trend for developer diaries continued with this potted rundown of the creation of *Lemmings 2*, covering the entire development. Work began on 19 May 1992 and the last bits were polished off on 15 October 1993.



CHARTS

JAN 1994

SNES

1. Super Mario All-Stars (Nintendo)
2. Street Fighter II Turbo (Capcom)
3. Mortal Kombat (Acclaim)
4. Striker (Elite)
5. Kevin Keegan's Player Manager (Imagineer)

AMIGA

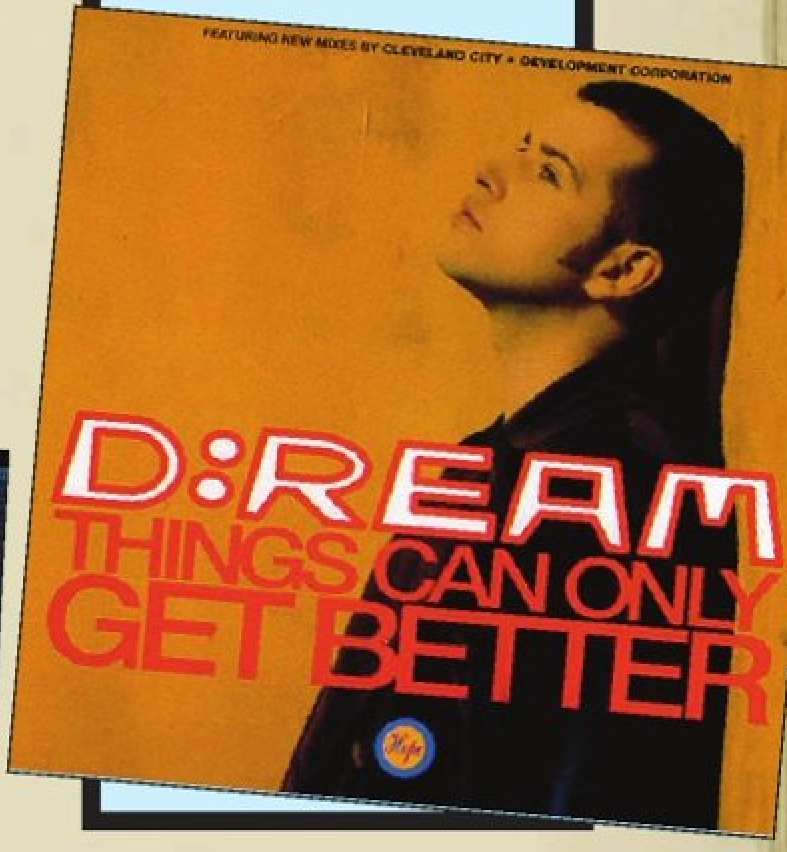
1. Frontier: Elite 2 (Gametek)
2. Premier Manager 2 (Gremlin Graphics)
3. Alien Breed 2 (Team17)
4. Micro Machines (Codemasters)
5. Body Blows Galactic (Team17)

COMMODORE 64

1. Creatures (Kixx)
2. The Simpsons (Hit Squad)
3. WWF WrestleMania (Hit Squad)
4. Street Fighter II (US Gold)
5. Night Shift (Kixx XL)

MUSIC

1. Things Can Only Get Better (D:Ream)
2. Twist & Shout (Chaka Demus & Pliers)
3. Come Baby Come (K7)
4. All For Love (Bryan Adams, Rod Stewart & Sting)
5. It's Alright (East 17)





Virtua Fighter

DON'T FIGHT UNTIL YOU CAN SEE THE POLYGONS OF THEIR EYES

#38



» 32X
» SEGA AM2
» 1995

A classic *Simpsons* episode sees Homer unexpectedly breaking through the 2D confines of his world to appear in the three spatial dimensions of ours, the juxtaposition highlighting the confining nature of the previous reality. It's a sensation mirrored by a first encounter with Sega's iconic *Virtua Fighter*.

Often hailed as a breakthrough for the genre, the Model-1-powered 1993 coin-op title dragged the one-on-one fighting game kicking and screaming into the third dimension, eschewing sprites for quadratic-surfaced mannequin fighters.

While rendered in 3D, the action ensues on a horizontal plane, much to the title's credit. As Bruce Lee once said: "Do not deny the classical approach simply as a reaction, or you will have created another pattern and trapped yourself there."

The polygonal nature of the game enables a true paradigm shift in gameplay. Unhindered by pre-drawn animation frames, *Virtua Fighter*'s smoothly realistic movement allows a previously unobtainable fluidity and depth of gameplay, the resulting game appearing a different beast entirely from those iconic 2D brawlers *Street Fighter II* and *Mortal Kombat*.

Bereft of fireballs and fatalities alike, *Virtua Fighter*'s strength lays not in gimmicks but in a repertoire of over 700 moves derived from a variety of traditional martial arts, including boxing and wrestling; training is the key to success as much in the *Virtua* world as in the real.

"Do not concentrate on the finger or you will miss all that heavenly glory."

By the time of the 32X port, even the once-cutting-edge arcade graphics had been comprehensively overtaken. Meanwhile, the Sega mushroom attachment's lower polygon count further necessitated a reduction in finesse, presenting simplified character models populating stages that found themselves demoted from majestic theatres of combat to simple areas. Yet everything that makes the coin-op so special remains surprisingly intact.

"Notice that the stiffest tree is most easily cracked, while the bamboo or willow survives by bending with the wind."

With *Virtua Fighter,* the Sega 32X appears effortlessly to out-perform the mighty oak that was the Saturn, eliminating loading times, almost abolishing the more powerful system's maddening flicker. Even today it stands proud as an impressive achievement in gaming, which remains utterly addictive through the faithful retention of the arcade progenitor's core gameplay. *

RETROBATE PROFILE

» NAME: NEUROMANCER
» JOINED: 11 AUGUST 2008
» LOCATION: STRAYLIGHT
» OCCUPATION: DEVELOPER
» FAVE GAME SYSTEM: ... CHANGES ON AN ALMOST DAILY BASIS...





To celebrate the incoming release of the 3DS re-mastering of Ocarina Of Time, Retro Gamer takes a look back at the game many people consider to be the pinnacle of the medium, and asks a number of developers and readers to give their views and opinions on the impact it had

When all is said and done, a great game is measured simply by the journey you've taken – that moment when you reflect on the hours you've invested and ask yourself 'was it really worth it?'

The best games in history have all provided us with memorable adventures we've enjoyed taking a commanding role in, adventures we've felt a strange polarised sense of disappointment and pleasure at seeing the credits roll, enjoyed paying a revisit to once or twice, and have provided us with memories we will likely carry with us forever – because we were there and we made them happen. For you, perhaps these include something as simple as rescuing Pauline from the clutches of Donkey Kong, or maybe you remember specific parts of bigger pictures most fondly – like the time you finally found you could pull off Dragon Punches on command (grasping the natural technique and not simply following inputs), slaughtered your first Cyberdemon, or crossed the finish line in *OutRun*.

That *Ocarina Of Time* is a game bursting at the seams with memorable moments like these all wrapped up inside one epic adventure makes it not only the best *Zelda* game in the series but, for many people, one of the greatest videogames as well. It's a game that takes you on the most perfect kind of adventure, one that anyone of any age can easily relate: you're the hero, you scale the castle, defeat the villain, rescue the princess, and in doing all of that restore peace to the land and become the stuff of legend.

In his image

While there can be no question that the original *The Legend Of Zelda* was a true watershed moment for videogames, and *Ocarina* owes it a sincere debt of thanks for putting the core pieces in place, it was merely a small portion, a compromise if you like, of what series creator Shigeru Miyamoto had actually envisioned for Link, Zelda, Gannon and the land of Hyrule. Since *Ocarina*'s release, Zelda's creator has revealed that *Ocarina Of Time* marks his true original vision of the world – it is the land of Hyrule he imagined, finally brought to life.

Back in 1986, when that first game in the series was released, technical constraints meant Miyamoto could only project the core themes of *Zelda* on the screen – staples such as the three central characters, the Triforce, Hyrule, the sense of freedom, and of course the dungeons. And as early as its first sequel, it was clear Miyamoto was beginning to think more about how, having smashed the pegs into the ground, he could start erecting his true image for Hyrule using the modest powers of the NES.

The Adventure Of Link, while widely branded as the 'black sheep' of the series, shares a number of striking similarities with the franchise's golden calf. The sequel added side-on platform sections that transported gamers into the heart of Hyrule, with this new viewpoint used to create village sections filled with people with which Link could interact and converse with during his quest. Not only would this help to breathe a greater sense of life and immersion into the world, but



» [N64] As the title implies, Ocarinas play an essential part in the story. Throughout his quest Link learns new songs that he must play to solve puzzles.





» [N64] The original plan was for *Ocarina* to be entirely first-person. While this idea was dropped, the perspective was kept for looking and aiming.



also weight a greater sense of responsibility on the shoulders of the player too.

The sequel also had a stronger emphasis on action. Link could now cast spells (in *Ocarina Of Time* Link could do the same, and a new magic meter allowed him to perform special charge attacks) and earn experience points to improve his attacks. While this levelling up mechanic was promptly dropped by the series soon after, this aspect of character development still played a big part in *Ocarina Of Time*'s gameplay – just now it was done by the far more interesting means of acquiring new gadgets, items, additional heart containers and better weapons during the quest.

But while *Ocarina* appears to be inspired most by *The Adventure Of Link*, the game also took a number of popular ideas and themes from other sequels too. The ocarinas, for example, which play a big part in helping you progress in the story, made their first appearance in the Game Boy game *Link's Awakening*, while *A Link To The Past*'s dark and light realms also returned, with Link aging seven years in the game to see the devastating effect Ganondorf's rule has had on the kingdom of Hyrule.

"When the project started, the team working on the game numbered around 15 people; by the time it neared completion this number had swelled to 50"

Work begins

Ocarina Of Time was first unveiled at Nintendo's Space World event in December 1995. Shown to a floor of astonished and excited attendees, Nintendo announced that the game would be ready in time to become a launch game for its successor to the Super Nintendo, the Nintendo 64. But with the launch just a year away, that projection proved a little ambitious. *Ocarina* didn't actually appear until the end of November, two years after the launch of the N64 in Japan, following a number of delays.

Designed on a heavily altered version of the *Mario 64* engine, *Ocarina*'s creation was handled by Nintendo's EAD branch, with different parts of its creation overseen by various teams headed up by different directors. Each team focused on areas such as scripting and story scenarios, Link's actions and camera controls, and coming up with the various items for him to use in the game. As the development progressed, further teams were added, overseeing aspects such as sound and special effects in the game. Finally, Kensuke Tanabe, writer on *A Link To The Past*, returned to once again pen the script for the game based on a story idea by Shigeru Miyamoto and Yoshiaki Koizumi.

Working as producer and supervisor, Miyamoto oversaw overall production of the game, giving ideas to the directors to develop and also it was his responsibility to see that all the individual pieces came together.





When *Mario 64* was released, Miyamoto was able to concentrate solely on *Zelda* to help the teams complete the game. When the project started, the developers working on the game numbered around 15; by the time it neared completion this number had swelled to 50.

A number of things delayed *Zelda*'s release. As well as its development moving across to the 64DD at one stage (with the plan to make it a launch game for the N64 disk-drive add-on), when thinking of how best to fully immerse the player in Hyrule like never before, Miyamoto had originally wanted the game to play out entirely in the first-person too. This idea, however, was dropped after it was decided that during the game the player would control Link both as a boy and then as an adult, and the idea would have lost much of its impact if Link remained out of sight for the majority of the adventure. Surprisingly, the game's memorable story was actually incorporated and finalised at the latter stages of the game's design.

In keeping with the game's focus on immersion and displaying the land of Hyrule in the best possible way, it was Miyamoto's intention that the camera in the game had a spotlight on Hyrule rather than Link and his actions. This decision made logical sense in the adventure game setting. In *Mario 64*, players benefited greatly





Magic Moments

We relive some of our favourite moments from *Ocarina Of Time*

Kokiri Forest

YOU START THE game in Kokiri Forest, Link's village, and can spent ages exploring it before venturing out into Hyrule Field. Acting almost as a training dungeon, Link has to retrieve both a sword and the Deku Shield to be granted an audience with The Great Deku Tree. When both objects are retrieved, Link then enters the tree and embarks on his first dungeon. Once complete, the tree warns Link of Ganondorf's evil intent, rewards him with the first spiritual stone and tells him to speak with princess Zelda.



Hyrule Field

MANY *ZELDA* FANS remember the first time they set foot onto Hyrule Field in the game as being a special and defining moment in gaming. The point at which *Ocarina* really starts to reveal its size and majesty, the field acts as a hub stage and is surrounded by various different areas, all populated by the different races that populate Hyrule. When you make your way to Hyrule Castle and the sunlight in the sky fades, you cannot help but feel both impressed and captivated.



Taming Epona

NAVIGATING HYRULE FIELD by foot is fine to begin with but later on in the game you'll be covering a lot of ground; it's a good idea to pay a stop to Lon Lon Ranch located near the centre of the field. Visiting there as a child, Link meets Malon, the owner's daughter, who teaches him to play Epona's song on his ocarina. When he returns as an adult, and learns that Ganodorf has handed the ranch to devious range hand Ingo, Link uses the song to tame Epona and bust her out. She is then his to ride in Hyrule Field.

Meeting the Princess

AFTER AN UNNECESSARY *Metal Gear*-style stealth section, in which Link must avoid the glare of the guards as they patrol the grounds of the castle, he finally catches up with princess Zelda. Their encounters always memorable, she tells Link that she fears that Ganondorf is seeking the Triforce to rule Hyrule, and so asks him to retrieve the remaining two spiritual stones and get to its before he does. And Link does just that. Well, she is the princess after all.



Lord Jabu-Jabu

THERE ARE SOME imaginative and brilliantly designed dungeons in *Ocarina* but none more quirky than the belly of Lord Jabu-Jabu. One of the game's trickier dungeons to complete, it sees Link getting swallowed by the giant, sacred whale-like creature after giving him an offering of fish, and then having to travel through his extremely large stomach to find Ruto, the princess of the Zora race, and retrieve the final spiritual stone together.

Using the Ocarina

MUSIC PLAYS A big part in *Ocarina*, as is to be expected from a game with a musical instrument in the title. Not only is the audio in the game dynamic, quickly changing depending on what's happening, but its characters and many areas are also given their own unique motif too. Music also has a significant part to play in the quest and story, thanks to the eponymous ocarinas. Acquiring his first ocarina from Saria when he leaves Koriki Forest, Link continually learns new songs to aid him on his quest – tunes to open doors, befriend people, even for summoning help.

Becoming Adult

THE SEQUEL *A Link To The Past* was the first game to introduce the dual-realm mechanic to the series. Proving so popular, it was then reintroduced brilliantly in *Ocarina*. When Link enters the Sacred Realm his concentration is momentarily distracted by the Master Sword, allowing Ganondorf to seize the Triforce. When Link awakens seven years later, he's an adult, and the kingdom of Hyrule has been cast into darkness and despair as a result of Ganandorf's abuse of the powerful relic. Link is given a startling glimpse of what the future holds should he fail in his quest.



The continuing adventures of Link

Ocarina Of Time may be one of his greatest ever adventures, but that wasn't the end to Link's adventures in Hyrule.



The Legend Of Zelda: Majora's Mask
System: N64 **Year Released:** 2000

There are some people who actually prefer this to *Ocarina Of Time*, and it's easy to see why that might be the case. Unlike *Ocarina*, *Majora's Mask* is structured around a constant three-day cycle that sees Link changing into a variety of different characters, as he tries to stop Termina, the alternate world of Hyrule being obliterated by its out of control moon.



The Legend Of Zelda: Oracle of Seasons
System: Game Boy Color **Year Released:** 2001

Oracle Of Ages marked Nintendo's first collaboration with Capcom on its popular series. Linking together with *Oracle Of Seasons* (a password allows you to continue your adventure) it's an enjoyable quest that sees Link manipulating the seasons to solve a slew of clever puzzles. It lacks the imagination of *Link's Awakening* but remains a worthy handheld adventure.



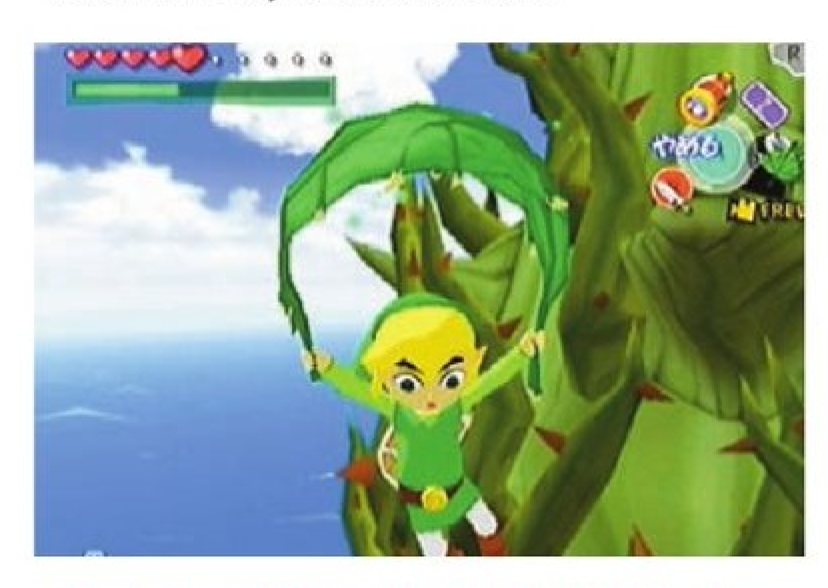
The Legend of Zelda: Oracle of Ages
System: Game Boy Color **Year Released:** 2001

Oracle Of Seasons' counterpart shares similar elements with *Majora's Mask*, in that you must manipulate the flow of time to achieve the vast majority of your goals. It's another grandiose adventure that shares a fair few similarities with *A Link To The Past*, and was further proof that Capcom could treat the *Zelda* franchise with just as much respect as Nintendo.



The Legend Of Zelda: A Link To The Past & Four Swords
System: Game Boy Advance **Year Released:** 2002

Although *A Link To The Past* wasn't a new game, it was significant here as it introduced the smaller standalone adventure *Four Swords*. Created by Capcom, it's a clever little four-player game that was expanded for the later GameCube release. *A Link To The Past* was changed very little, but it's surprisingly well-suited to gaming on the go.



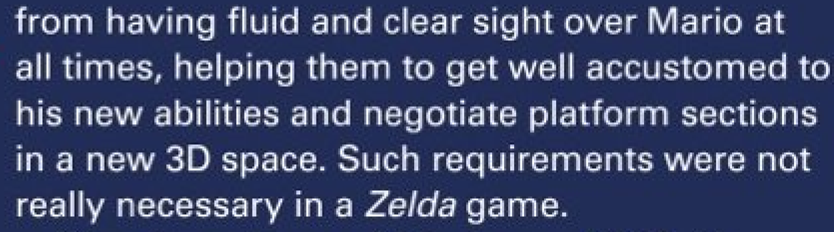
The Legend Of Zelda: The Wind Waker
System: GameCube **Year Released:** 2002

Many were put off by *The Wind Waker*'s cel-shaded visuals, which is a real shame, as they enabled Miyamoto to convey a sense of emotion in his characters that had never been seen before or since. The expansive ocean travelling put some off, but everyone else discovered another incredible adventure that easily captured the spirit of earlier games.



The Legend of Zelda: Four Swords Adventures
System: GameCube **Year Released:** 2004

Featured on page 84 of this very issue, *Four Swords Adventures* was the second outing for Link on GameCube, and took the series is a new direction. It's a superb four-player game that sees you either controlling four Links separately or teaming togethe. We'd kill for a Wii sequel – it's that good.



from having fluid and clear sight over Mario at all times, helping them to get well accustomed to his new abilities and negotiate platform sections in a new 3D space. Such requirements were not really necessary in a *Zelda* game.

Since the release of *The Legend Of Zelda,* Miyamoto had always wanted to make players feel as if they were really inside Hyrule. With the N64 giving him the power to finally do this, Miyamoto and his teams thought about how best to make the player feel fully immersed in its world. And, in finding their answer, they came up with another of *Ocarina Of Time*'s best aspects: the controls.

To say the controls in *Ocarina* are attuned perfectly to the game world better than any 3D game that has come before or since is no exaggeration. Making full use of the crazy number of buttons on the N64 controller, Link was able to effortless navigate Hyrule. Simple but very effective inclusions – such as having him jump automatically whenever he was steered off the edge of a platform (considerately saving you the obvious job), and a context-sensitive A button which could be used to make Link wave his sword around, open doors, move objects, climb platforms, and converse with Hyrule's many memorable characters – made the game instantly playable.

> "Every aspect of Ocarina felt well-considered; it was like the game was trying its hardest to make your stay in Hyrule as pleasurable as possible"

Similarly, using items and viewing the world was made a breeze thanks to clever use of the controller's yellow C (camera) buttons. In third-person mode, items could be assigned to them to enable easy and immediate access during the game, while in first-person mode the same buttons offered total control over the game's camera to help you get your bearings and offer precision aiming for weapons such as the slingshot and boomerang. Combat, like everything else in the game, was also made incredibly simple thanks to an innovative new combat system the game introduced called Z-targeting. An automatic aiming mechanic for Link's projectile weapons, it has since become combat staple in videogames and has been used in many games across various different genres.

In addition to the game's obliging control scheme, players were also aided on their quest by a fairy helper called Navi. Acting as your guide throughout the adventure, and never away from Link's side, she would point out points of interest



The Legend Of Zelda: The Minish Cap

System: Game Boy Advance **Year Released:** 2004

The Minish Cap is another fine effort from developers Capcom and dovetails nicely with the events of *Four Swords* and *Four Swords Adventures*. In addition to introducing a talking bird hat and a variety of excellent new items to collect, *The Minish Cap* also shrinks Link down for the vast majority of the game, which gives it a very distinctive look.



The Legend Of Zelda: Twilight Princess

System: GameCube/Wii **Year Released:** 2006

As good as *Twilight Princess* was, it was more a retread of ground covered in *Ocarina Of Time* than it was a brand new adventure. It was also hampered on the Wii thanks to controls that, while decent, weren't as accessible or intuitive as expected. Our advice would be to make the effort to hunt down the more expensive – but far more satisfying – GameCube offering.



The Legend Of Zelda: Phantom Hourglass

System: DS **Year Released:** 2007

Phantom Hourglass continues the adventures of cel-shaded Link, and proves to be another essential addition to the *Zelda* cannon. The little niggles of *The Wind Waker* have been fixed, while the interesting theme of going ever deeper into a core dungeon and some truly ingenious puzzles ensured that new adopters had plenty to invest in.



The Legend Of Zelda: Spirit Tracks

System: DS **Year Released:** 2009

Although we enjoyed *Spirit Tracks*, there was a distinct feeling that the franchise and well-used formulae of the past were beginning to run out of steam. The train sections proved disappointingly simplistic and monotonous, while the dungeons lacked the pizzazz and cleverness of precious offerings. It's still a great adventure, of course, but we're used to more from Link.



[N64] This odd stealth section, which sees Link avoiding guards to reach princess Zelda, is one of the less impressive sections in the game.

during the game as well as offer useful hints and suggestions to help you complete puzzles.

Every aspect of *Ocarina* felt well-considered; it was like the game was trying its hardest to make your stay in Hyrule as pleasurable as possible, so that you'd tell all of your friends to pay it a visit, or maybe even decide to revisit it again yourself.

Rewriting the legend

The story of *Ocarina Of Time* is set before the events of the first four games in the series, and sticks to the traditional *Zelda* template: Link must venture into a series of enemy-filled dungeons, find a desired object and then make his escape by defeating a gargantuan boss blocking the exit route. However, *Ocarina*, like *A Link To The Past* before it, is split into two very distinct sections. The first, which is set in a lush and vibrant-looking depiction of Hyrule, sees Link as a young boy, under orders from princess Zelda to retrieve three Spiritual Stones that will grant him access to the Sacred Realm where the Triforce is kept. Simply getting to this point can take players around a week – more should they embark on many of the side-quests – but this is less than halfway through the adventure. Upon unsealing the Sacred Realm, Ganondorf pilfers the Triforce and Link is sealed in the Sacred Realm.

It is once you reach this point that events take a dramatic turn. Seven years have now passed, and when Link awakens he is met by one of seven sages whose job is to protect the Triforce. Now a young adult, Link learns that Ganondorf has used the Triforce to cast the kingdom of Hyrule into darkness. Hope now rests with Link reawakening five dormant sages, by travelling to five temples in Hyrule to defeat Ganondorf's monsters and break his evil spell. If he succeeds, the sages can trap Ganondorf inside the Sacred Realm and restore the kingdom of Hyrule to its original state.



» [N64] Unlocking Epona is one of the game's must-do side-missions – otherwise you'll make some pretty long treks across Hyrule Field.





» [N64] The music in the game was composed by Koji Kondo, who was responsible for creating the music in all of the main *Zelda* games.

The moment that Link steps outside and sees the effects Ganondorf's reign has had on Hyrule – sapping it of all life, colour and beauty and turning it into a dark, depressing, shrivelled up shell of its former self – is one of *Ocarina Of Time*'s many rug-pulling moments. Hyrule now looks ashen and volcanic; the walking dead replace the fizzy townsfolk; and Kokiri Forest is overgrown with deadly flora and vegetation, no longer a safe haven for Link, but the perfect place for evil to thrive.

Like that memorable scene in *Back To The Future 2*, where Marty returns to a bleak and unwelcoming image of the present in which Biff has become a casino magnate, it's an effective plot device that shows the hero an important glimpse at what his future will be should he fail to put things right. In *Ocarina Of Time*, the effect is used just as evocatively as in the movie, spurring the player on to complete their quest and put things right. Indeed, paying a return visit to many of the familiar locations around Hyrule at this point kicks up a number of surprises for Link and the player. Lon Lon Ranch, the stables where Link finds and (once an adult) wins his trusty horse Epona, is now under new ownership. Walking through its tall gates expecting to find a friendly face, Link learns that its original proprietors, Talon and his daughter, have been mercilessly booted out of their home by Ganondorf, and ownership has now been handed to Talon's deceitful stablehand Ingo. This, and many other changes for the worse you learn about, which soon add mounting weight to the quest, as you see not only the important but also the personal effects of your actions.

"An enchanting and perfect game world, which set an early benchmark for all 3D adventures that has still yet to be bettered in any meaningful way"

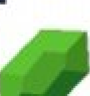
The legacy of Zelda

With its numerous delays, an almost-switch of platform, and also in taking that sometimes tricky step up to 3D, it would be fair to say that *Ocarina Of Time* exceeded almost everybody's expectations at the time. Nintendo not only appeased longstanding fans of the franchise by delivering a brand new 3D *Zelda* game to surpass the lofty eminence of *A Link To The Past*, but also managed to attract a whole new audience to the franchise by delivering one of the greatest adventure games to ever see release. Garnering high acclaim and rave review scores across the board, and making history by scoring the first ever 40/40 in *Weekly Famitsu*, the only other game sequels to have ever had the same kind of impact are perhaps *Street Fighter II* and *Mario 64*.

If we want to be incredibly picky, we'd say that there are some weaker aspects of *Ocarina Of Time* that don't live up to the majesty displayed elsewhere, and which leave it looking and feeling fairly dated today. For example, at points it's not made explicitly clear where you should be going next in the game, and there are sections that only open up to you on the completion of some pretty stupid criteria – such as cleansing a room entirely of bats (which can sometimes mean that the odd wayward one can leave you stumped), or having two conversations with the same character in







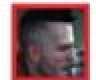
Favourite moments from Ocarina Of Time

Readers offer us a link to the past by recalling the Ocarina moment that has stayed with them more than any other

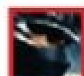
theantmesiter
Finishing it. I bought *Ocarina Of Time* on release day back in 1998 and it literally took me ten years to finish it. Looking back, it really was the greatest adventure I ever experienced in gaming. I aged along with Link and almost cried when it was over. And with that, I boxed up the game and haven't touched it since.



ShadowMan
Getting out of the Water Temple. Words cannot describe my joy and relief to finally finish that pain in the ass.



RetroMartin
Pulling out the Master Sword; classic scene, classic tune… and the ability to change from adult to kid!



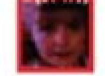
Shinobi
When you first meet Zelda and she plays Epona's Song – the best piece of music ever! Also, the art gallery, and the Grim Reaper on the horse that came out of the paintings..



sscott
Walking out onto Hyrule field for the first time and thinking, 'I can go anywhere I want!'



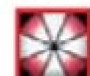
The Mask Seller
I've mentioned this before but when Link first leaves Kokiri Forest, the parting with Saria on the wooden rope bridge gets me every time. They're just children in the game but the parting is handled so well. It conveys a lot more emotion with its muddy textures, simple character models and purely text script then any FMV-enhanced epic I've played. I also love the bit when the Goron King rocks out to Saria's Song.



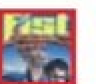
learnedrobb
Just one moment? There's no way I can manage it. I'll say the whole damn game!



StickHead
Got to be escaping Lon Lon Ranch on the back of Epona. I felt like Steve McQueen in *The Great Escape*.



mrmarvelxiii
It has to be the ending. No other game ending has touched me so deeply; the music, the gathering around the Lon Lon Ranch Bonfire and that final shot of young Link and Zelda meeting once again…



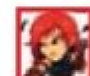
Budley Moore
Simply solving some of the fiendishly deceptive puzzles, kicking myself after spending hours trying to solve them, only to realise it was something simple, like firing an arrow into the eye or such. A great game.



Reglan
When Link first encounters King Dodongo. I think my jaw hit the floor from being caught off guard by how massive that thing was. The ensuing battle is still one of my favorites.



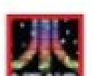
Zapper
Beating the game without picking up any extra heart containers. The atmosphere is generally great in this game but this challenge I set for myself made me feel it a lot more. I had gotten a bit too used to the game after playing it so much, so this made it a lot more exciting.



Miketendo
I think the most important moment in *Ocarina Of Time* isn't just one moment, it's all the moments. That was one of the last games that I just could not put down until I finished it. I haven't had that feeling since *Ocarina*. The overall feeling of massive exploration was astonishing, and I think that's what ultimately sold me on the game in the first place.

FatTrucker
At the time it was released probably the standout moment for me was when you finished the first hour or so of godawful Nintendo™ handholding and 'practice', and suddenly had access to anywhere you wanted to go. It just seemed so suddenly unscripted and ripe for exploration as you walked out onto Hyrule field for the first time. It was probably the first step toward whats now known as 'sandbox' gaming, and it felt genuinely new and exciting at the time.

dste
I would say, for me, that out of the entire game my favourite moment would be when, after seven years, Link leaves the Temple of Time and you see how time and evil has destroyed Castle Town. Death Mountain sitting in the background with the light whirring around it just looks immense, and it just introduces the next part of the game so brilliantly.



boggyb68
The beginning; all I do in it is wander around the village throwing rocks all over the place and making a silly whooping noise at the same time… it's marvellous!

quick succession. Don't even get us started with the swimming mechanics, or the legendary frustration of its slow-motion Water Temple dungeon. However, its lush, beautiful 3D world, fluid controls, masterful storytelling, game design and incredible pacing make it as perfect a game as you could probably ever hope to play.

That its influence and popularity can still be felt to this day is a mark of its impact and legacy. Having already been re-released twice before, first with *Ocarina Of Time: Master Quest* for GameCube in 2003 – a revision of the game 2featuring new puzzles and tougher dungeons to tackle – and then for Virtual Console, the game is once again thrust back into spotlight with a new remastered – and, dare we even say, definitive – edition for the 3DS. As well as rendering the Hyrule in stereoscopic 3D, *Ocarina Of Time 3D* will be making subtle improvements to the gameplay, full use of the console's in-built touch-screen for item selection, and gyroscope technology to offer motion-controlled aiming. It will also come packaged with both the original N64 and *Master Quest* editions of the game, as well as a brand new boss rush mode for fans to hone their Z-triggering skills with.

Clearly proud of what it achieved with *Ocarina Of Time* – creating one of the most enchanting and perfect game worlds, and setting an early benchmark for all 3D adventures that has still yet to be bettered in any meaningful way – Nintendo is clearly hoping the 3DS will help encourage those who missed the game first time around to pick up and experience one of its most finest and accomplished videogames. The muddy Nintendo 64 visuals may have lost some their magic a decade on, but that's never been *Zelda*'s formula for success. As we said at the start, the mark of whether a game is good or not is always judged by reflecting upon the journey it's taken you on. No game series on any format proves that better than *Zelda*, and few games, if any, offer a journey as magical, memorable and timeless as *Ocarina Of Time*.



[N64] *Ocarina* features plenty of epic bosses, made more interesting by their imposing shapes filling the screen and clever attack patterns.





Developers celebrate Ocarina Of Time

Michael Romero

I remember being blown away by the whole Deku Tree dungeon. It had awesome puzzles, incredible atmosphere and it concluded with the creepy parasite-boss, Gohma. I was thinking, 'This game is already blowing me away, how much better can it get?' Then, I entered Hyrule Field. It then suddenly hit me, how big this world of Hyrule could be. I remember how excited I was, to know that there was so much more to see.

In the *Zelda* franchise, Nintendo continues to carry over all the successful elements of its past games to its new ones. Some people balk at that tactic, probably claiming that Nintendo is running out of ideas and/or just sticking with the winning formula. I think that is half true. It is sticking with the winning formula. It re-tells the same story in a different world, carries over similar designs, et cetera. I think players love the familiarity of the *Zelda* world with a new and refreshing take. We don't ever feel lost from what made *Zelda* great to begin with, and get to experience something new concurrently. I think it's brilliant.

On a developer stand-point, taking *Zelda* from 2D to 3D definitely takes the cake. It's directly comparable to the effect of *Mario 64*'s release. That game was nearly perfect and it set a whole new standard. Nintendo had to replicate that success. I've read a little technical documentary on some of the development challenges of *Ocarina Of Time*. They pushed that N64 hardware and did some very clever things to make its world amazing. As a programmer in the game industry, I'm in awe of the success it was able to achieve.

Eugene Jarvis

It always amazed me that anyone played the game. No gratuitous violence, zombie liquefaction, or body part explosions. What's the point?

John Romero

I actually never played *Ocarina Of Time* or *Majora's Mask*. I know, I know - epic fail. I know they were just amazing. I own them both and vow to play them some day.

Martyn Brown

I've long been a fan of *Zelda*, although my first real introduction was *Ocarina Of Time* on N64, which I completed prior to my first son being born in the late Nineties. I loved the game, especially the warm atmosphere and constant sense of wonder. One of my most abiding memories has to be of the Water Temple, but I'm not sure that would count as a best memory. I'm looking forward to playing it again on 3DS and also seeing both my sons enjoy the game too.

I think *Zelda* has such a rich appeal to so many and, due to the craft in the game, it's a series that everyone holds dear. Just the sounds are enough to stir emotions – and thats the way it should be.

Trip Hawkins

More than any game in history, the *Zelda* games delivered 'the epic hero's journey' a la Joseph Campbell. It does not get much better than rescuing a princess and the *Zelda* games combined mythic power with very solid game design.



Peter Molyneux

I played *Ocarina Of Time* when my son was a baby with him on my knee sleeping, as I played. In fact now he's 8, but he can still whistle the *Ocarina Of Time* theme song! The scale of the world, the pacing of the gameplay coupled with the balance which was perfectly tuned as you progressed through the vast world.

It's a vast world that feels real in its mythology and consistency. It's one of the few titles from Japan that has bridged to the West, and its character remains particularly consistent.

Jon Ritman

I was completely hooked on *Ocarina Of Time*, played from morning to night (one of the advantages of being a games programmer is that you can excuse such excess as research) until I finished it. I love the way the game just keeps adding layers yet you still return to previously played sections to find yet more there. As always, the game controls are fairly simple, so gameplay is pretty intuitive; this and the excellent camera code allow the player to become fully immersed in the amazing atmosphere. Personally, I can't wait for the next *Zelda* and I'm sure many of the games-playing public are with me on that one; it truly is a game series that can sell a console.

Dave Perry

My best memory of *Zelda* was hearing the audience go absolutely crazy when the first few notes were played at a Video Games Live concert. Of all the games (the biggest brands ever) *Zelda* got by far the biggest response. It's brand value is almost magical at this point; if we could look at Gamer DNA, we'd see a little green cap in there somewhere. It's definitely one of the brands I think will live on forever.

Jon Hare

I think that *Zelda*'s success lies in the fact that it was one of the first games to merge classic RPG-style gameplay with its trademark console style presentation and accessibility.

Julian Gollop

The *Zelda* games I have played are *Link's Awakening* and *Twilight Princess*. However, I do intend to get Ocarina of Time for the 3DS.

David Braben

My fondest memories of *Ocarina Of Time* on the N64 were perhaps of when you first get Epona the horse, and can ride across the plains at the hub of the game. It felt quite liberating.

It was a great game that took me a very long time to complete, and I think it is the best and most rounded of the *Zelda* games. *Wind Waker* is also good, but I found the boat sections got in the way a little.

Link has remained one of Nintendo's iconic characters, and a sequence of great, memorable games has helped cement the *Zelda* games into the games psyche along with *Mario*.

Ste Pickford

The first thing that pops into my head when you mention Ocarina of Time is seeing it running for the first time, while working on N64 development at Software Creations. Most of the N64 development team were squashed into one of the programmers' offices, watching in awe as it booted up for the first time, and we saw Link waking up in that tree-house room.

Then, there's the beautiful intro sequence with the horse riding across the plains. Magical! I loved the fact that you could ride around that very same area later in the game. The boss fight with the ghost guy on a horse who jumps out of the paintings on the walls – that was amazing and incredibly imaginative.

I was very impressed by the size of the outdoor sections – the fact that you could see hills in the distance and go and visit that area. The big field was very impressive, and the whole landscape had a real sense of being a coherant, physical place.

More than that though, and harder to explain, there was a kind of harmony between the disciplines of code, art, music, sound, and game design, which very few games manage to achieve. Everything slotted together perfectly. You never got the feeling the designer was trying to achieve something that the artists or coders couldn't achieve, or that anything was out of place. Even what could be thought of as technical weak points of the system, like the very low texture resolution, were turned into advantages by helping evoke a sense of mystery with slightly blurry locations. I have to say though, I thought *Majora's Mask* was better...

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» EXPOSING RETRO GAMES THAT ARE PROBABLY BEST LEFT IN THE PAST

THE A-TEAM

We obviously don't need to tell you that inside the patchy pantheon of license videogames exist a large number of terrible games. But for every *Highlander, Knight Rider, Cliffhanger, Lawnmower Man* and *Last Action Hero* that has upset gamers and pilfered their cash over the years, this game right here could possibly trump all of them in terms of badness; a game so ill-conceived that it will make you strongly question how the entire notion of licensed videogames didn't just implode the second after it was finished and first inserted into a Commodore 64.

Having played all we could stand of the game – just shy of five minutes – we deduced that the problem with *The A-Team* lies in its failure to grasp the show on which it is based; the premise of criminals wanted for a crime they didn't commit was sadly overlooked in favour of how to turn it into a budget game.

That the best bit about *A-Team* is its title screen should tell you everything you need to know about how bad the game is. It shows a nice recreation of the *A-Team* logo – with an admirable attempt to recreate the cool way that the A was formed by a thousand bullet holes in the opening of the television show – above the dismembered heads of the four team members. Each head is given its own signature animation: B.A.'s gold chains and earrings jangle; Face, the playboy, winks; hoagie lover Hannibal has a magical cigar in his mouth that keeps appearing and then disappearing (maybe he's in two minds whether to quit); and the edges of Murdock's mouth swell to make him smile (and make him look like a madman). And while all of this is going on the *Star Wars* theme plays in the background. Yes, for some logic-eschewing reason, Courbois Software decided to ditch the famous *A-Team* music (it's not as if it was memorable or easy to replicate, after all) for the *Star Wars* theme instead – rather mystifying, and ever so slightly nonsensical.

Further confusion then follows immediately after following orders to start the game. A single-screen vertical shooter, the gameplay in *The A-Team* sees you assume the role of a lone nondescript soldier, stationed at the bottom of the screen with the bewildering mission to either gun down all four members of the A-Team, or survive an ambush (we're not sure which). A more accurate description of the mission is you're tasked with blowing away the hovering, disembodied heads of the A-Team from the title screen, which have now been imbued with the power to regenerate at will and return fire at your avatar. You engage in this activity until either all three of your lives are lost or you survive to see the next level begin, which as it turns out is completely indistinguishable from the previous one.

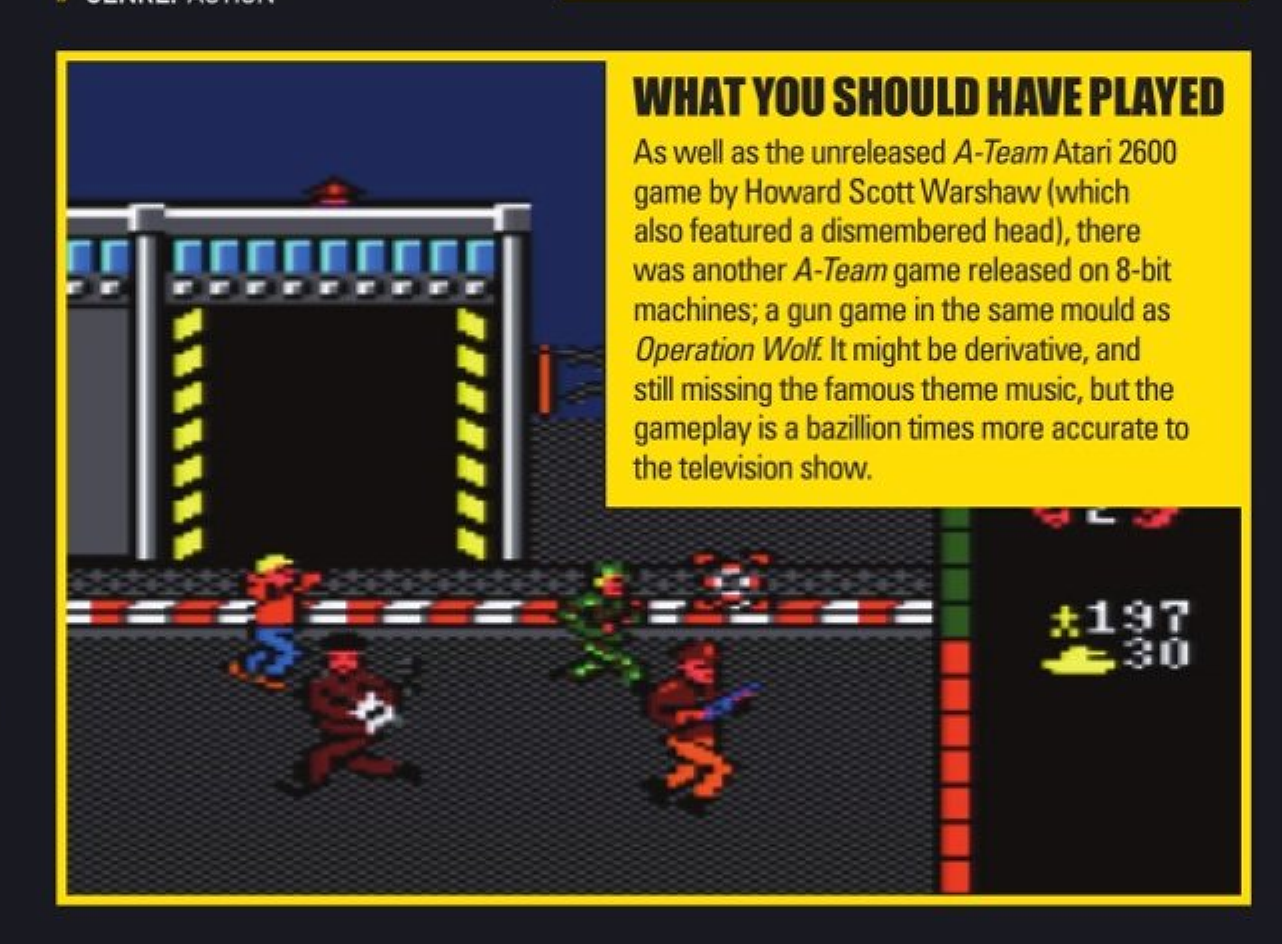
If having little to do with the original television series and being both generic and boring wasn't bad enough, the gameplay is also hampered by terribly twitchy controls, mainly due to the character sprite being so massive that you have very little room to dodge the enemy bullets that cascade down the screen at a supersonic rate. Terrible in every respect then, *The A-Team* can scratch this down as a crime (on videogames) which they did actually commit, and deserve punishment for.

GAME INFO



» **SYSTEM:** C64
» **RELEASED:** 1984
» **PUBLISHER:** COURBOIS SOFTWARE
» **GENRE:** ACTION





WHAT YOU SHOULD HAVE PLAYED

As well as the unreleased *A-Team* Atari 2600 game by Howard Scott Warshaw (which also featured a dismembered head), there was another *A-Team* game released on 8-bit machines; a gun game in the same mould as *Operation Wolf*. It might be derivative, and still missing the famous theme music, but the gameplay is a bazillion times more accurate to the television show.

» [C64] Our solider gets shot and caught by the A-Team – which is strange in itself, given that the titular quartet are supposed to be the ones on the run.



» THE POINTLESS PARTS



THE GRAPHICS

To say the visuals are basic is a bit of a gross understatement. Imagine an Atari 2600 port of a terrible LCD game.



THE MUSIC

The music in the game is pretty good; it's just a shame it's the *Star Wars* theme. We certainly don't pity these fools.



THE GAMEPLAY

According to this game, *The A-Team* was a show about a lone soldier stuck in a cave who gets haunted by giant ghostly heads.

Knightmare

Children's television lost viewers to computer games in the Eighties, but one show bucked the trend. Knightmare had many links with computer games and later had two interactive spin-offs. Andrew Fisher talks to the people behind the phenomenon

"Welcome, watchers of illusion, to the castle of confusion." Those words greeted viewers on Monday 7 September 1987. *Knightmare*'s creator was Tim Child, previously editor of regional news for Anglia TV. In an interview with *Cult Times*, Child remembers: "I was writing and presenting a weekly games software spot for television, in the era of the Spectrum and C64. I was amazed by the creativity in these games, given the restricted performance of the micros of the time." Inspired by dungeon exploration games *Atic Atac* and *Dragontorc*, Child produced two unseen pilot shows – first known as *Dungeon Doom*, then *Knightmare* – that had a 'dungeoneer' exploring rooms and meeting actors. The key twist was that the dungeoneer could not see – the Helmet of Justice placed on their head blinded them to everything except what was right below them. A team of three friends guided them, helped and hindered by the dungeon master.

To viewers, the dungeoneer was moving around backdrops with stone walls, staircases and large monsters. The dungeon was split into levels reached by travelling down wells, with the puzzles becoming tougher as they delved deeper. Conquering all three levels saw the team awarded a small statue of a knight, inspired by Anglia TV's original logo. Creating the backdrops for the adventure was artist David Rowe: "I made a trip to Richmond to deliver some finished artwork to Melbourne House. The art director, Paula Byrne, said that they had had some enquiries from Anglia Television. I went straight from Richmond to Norwich with my portfolio to find out more."

So how did a flat painting become a three-dimensional room? The secret was chroma key, or blue screen. Rowe explains: "The team that worked on *Knightmare* was at the cutting edge of the technology. They developed ways of flat lighting the blue studio to conceal the corners. They could then spotlight the dungeoneer within this space and preserve the shadow for overlaying on my background artwork." The camera was in a fixed position and a template grid matched objects in the room to the artwork, the physical staircases and wells painted blue to take on the texture of the painting. "The paintings had to match the flat lighting too, so that the



IN THE KNOW

» **PUBLISHER:** ACTIVISION/MINDSCAPE
» **DEVELOPER:** MD SOFTWARE FOR ELECTRIC DREAMS/TONY CROWTHER
» **PLATFORM:** SPECTRUM, AMSTRAD, C64 (ACTIVISION)/ AMIGA, ATARI ST (MINDSCAPE)
» **RELEASED:** 1987 (ACTIVISION)/ 1992 (MINDSCAPE)
» **GENRE:** ADVENTURE






» Joanne Heywood as Stiletta, introduced in the final series of the programme.

PLAY ON, DUNGEONEER

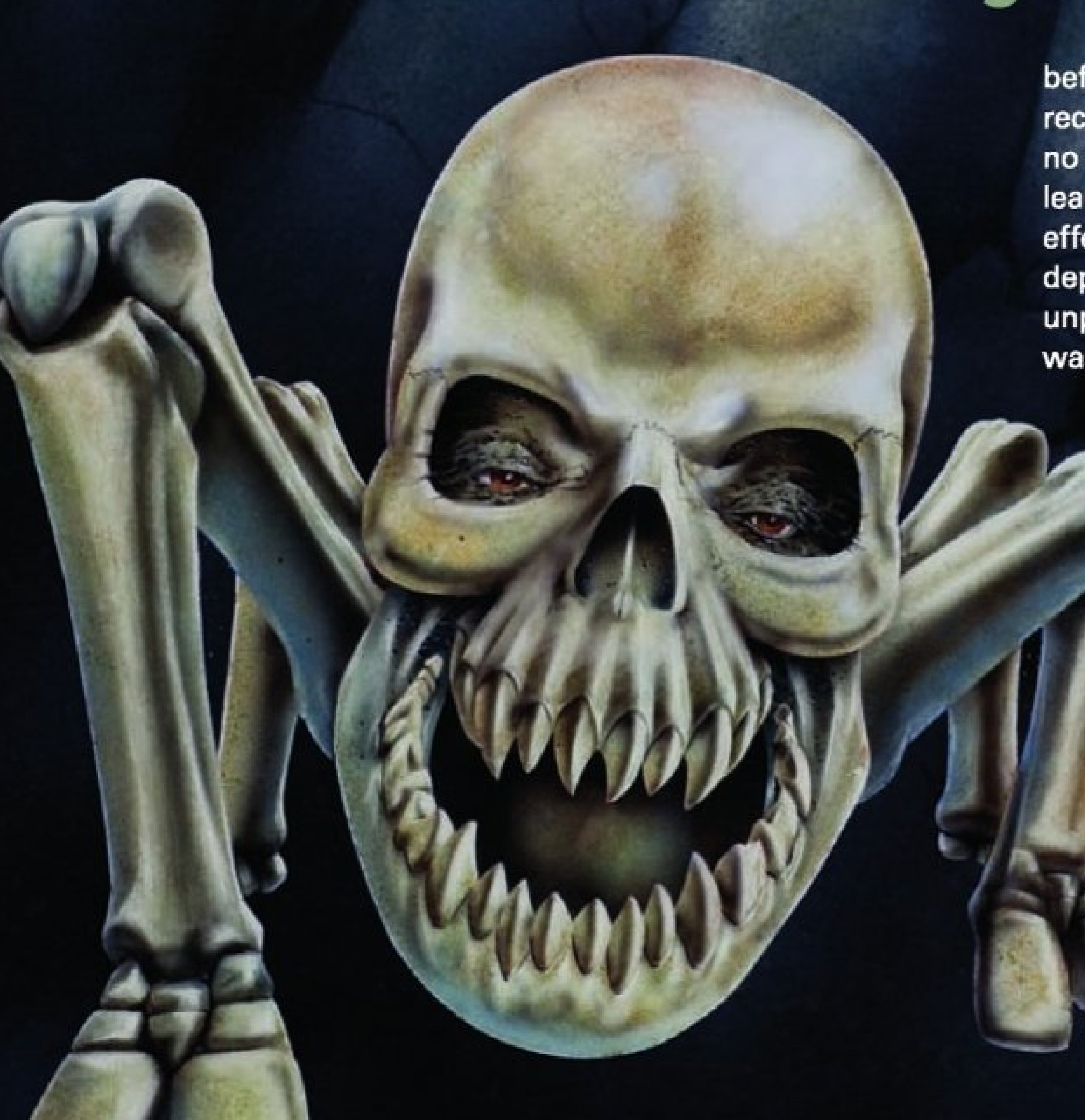
MILTON BRADLEY RELEASED a spin-off board game for 2-4 players, with Merlin's book of riddles challenging the players. There were also seven adventure books, the first four published by Corgi, aimed at older readers. Both featured artwork by David Rowe. Hugo Myatt remembers: "I did a number of book signings in full costume. It was a bit cheeky as I had no personal input into the books whatsoever. I also made appearances at the games show at Earls Court. I was totally mobbed by hundreds of fans. It was the only time I have ever felt like a pop star."

computer graphics team could light them in any variety of ways. It was stunning. I knew the artworks were two-dimensional, but when I saw the first dungeoneer walk 'into' the room it made them real."

Behind the scenes was Robert Harris, a graphics wizard who had previously worked on the BBC's adaptation of *The Hitchhiker's Guide To The Galaxy*. Having gone freelance, his Travelling Matte Company had a trailer full of computer equipment used to create and store the rooms. Harris also designed the show's logo.

Treguard was the Dungeon Master, portrayed by Hugo Myatt, and he enjoyed the role tremendously: "It was unlike anything I had ever done before – the programmes were recorded as if live, and there were no retakes. Normally an actor has to learn his lines and deliver them as effectively as possible, but it doesn't depend on the reactions of four unpredictable youngsters! This was dangerous and exciting. When a team lost you could almost hear the groan sound over the land."

"The team that worked on Knightmare was at the cutting edge of technology"



Over time the series became more sophisticated. Puppets and CGI monsters were added, the Eye Shield gave a temporary first-person view, and real castles were used as backdrops. A new adversary, in the form of Lord Fear, added real peril. "He was a sort of Moriarty to Treguard's Sherlock Holmes," says Myatt. "By this time I had an assistant – first Pickle and later on Majida – which enabled me to comment and to speculate on the actions of the team. Great fun." The spying glass gave teams the chance to overhear clues. Viewing figures remained high, and a broadcasting award from the New York International Film & TV Awards, also narrowly missing out on a Royal Television Society award, sealed the popularity. Myatt says: "In many a home viewers were yelling at the box, encouraging or warning of perils ahead. The best moments were undoubtedly the best teams."

The first *Knightmare* computer game was by Activision, with Jon Dean in charge. "Rod Cousens had a great eye for upcoming trends and saw *Knightmare* as a strong innovation in TV," he recalls. "David Rowe introduced us to Tim Child. We had some great meetings with Broadsword [Productions], and they encouraged us to innovate with the core concept for the game systems of the day – the Spectrum and Amstrad were our key targets. It's great when a licensor gives you that much scope to innovate."

Working alongside Dean was programmer Mev Dinc, immortalised in the game as King Mevlut. The unusual control system involved pressing a letter key to give an action,



FURTHER ADVENTURES

BROADSWORD PRODUCED MORE programmes using its experience from *Knightmare*. *The Satellite Game* was an early programme for British Satellite Broadcasting, David Rowe providing hand-painted backgrounds for the sci-fi setting. *Cyberzone* with Craig Charles aimed to cash in on the virtual reality boom, while Michael Troughton took children on trips around stately homes in a time-travelling bus with the BBC series *Timebusters*. Work on *Virtually Impossible* meant that the last series of *Knightmare* was cut to just ten episodes, and neither was recommissioned despite a letter-writing campaign by viewers.

Knightmare's most successful spin-off was in France: *Le Chevalier Du Labyrinthe* (*The Knight Of The Labyrinth*), sponsored by Sega, with a Sega console as the prize. With 104 episodes produced and shown weekly from September 1990, many familiar elements were in place such as the helmet and the clue objects. Key differences included the advisors watching from a balcony and each team having three lives, with an advisor replacing the dungeoneer each time a life was lost. Spanish and German versions also existed, but the American pilot, *Lords Of The Game*, was not commissioned. *Knightmare VR*, backed with National Lottery money, and adult-oriented series *Timegate* also failed to find a buyer.

with a second key changing the object or character involved. "I think the user interface and clever keyword recognition made the game very accessible. From what I remember we did not have a lot of development time, so I feel we captured the feel of the show pretty well," says Dinc. The fearsome wall monsters asked a series of tricky trivia questions, created by Dean and his wife Elaine, who helped with game design. Dean says: "We thought it kept the feel of a classic text adventure game but without the need to guess words. Everything was context-sensitive so the game was pretty easy to get into but had depth once you mastered it."

With only a single player on screen, the flavour of the series was cleverly re-created. The life force meter – on TV a helmeted head that gradually lost pieces to reveal a skull – was a burning candle that got lower as energy was lost. Rooms were shown on pages of a book that turned over. Treguard was at the top of the screen to offer guidance, while two oracles – one good, one bad – replaced the advisors. Spells were given cryptic names, unlike the TV show's clever mechanism of having the dungeoneer spell out the name of the spell. Dean remembers: "[The team] wanted to build games that were innovative in terms of gameplay and look. So I was able to ask for a book with turning pages, and they figured out how to make it happen!"

Dinc adds: "Jon just asked for it and he got it. I think technically there were quite a few nice touches and achievements. The game looked very good on the old Speccy." Reviews were mixed, but it did pick up a *Sinclair User* Classic award.

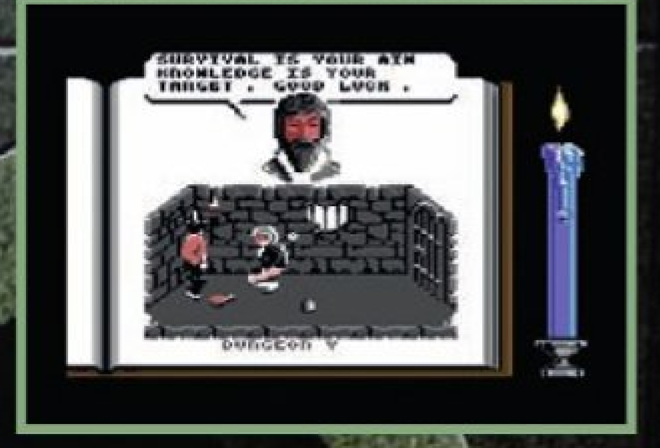
The bold adventurer who accepted the challenge of creating a 16-bit *Knightmare* game was Tony Crowther. "Tim Child was a big fan of *Captive* and approached Mindscape, who in turn asked me to write *Knightmare*. And I gladly agreed." The 3D role-playing game *Captive*, itself inspired by *Dungeon Master*, was to form the basis for the new game. The player chose a team of four characters, with differing races and skills. Treguard appeared in the game as a shield, offering players advice and clues.

Contrary to popular opinion, there was a lot of input from the TV creators. "Tim Child sent me pages and pages of scripts used in the TV show to plough through. I had an idea how the game should play, so went my way first, then Tim would pull me back in line with the show. We used Jan Thwaits, the graphic artist on the TV show, but I had watched lots of episodes when I was younger so based the game on memories of the TV show." Crowther remembers that development time was quite short, about half the time taken to write *Captive*, and there were some good reviews.

After eight series, *Knightmare* came to an end. Broadsword would work on several more shows (see 'Further Adventures'), but none are as fondly remembered. Repeats on the Sci-Fi Channel and Challenge brought in new viewers and stirred interest, and plans for a revived series included virtual actors, once again created by Child's company, Televirtual. One of the biggest resources is the Knightmare.com website, launched in 1999 and now run by Alan Boyd.

"I think the first series I saw was series 3. I had the *Knightmare* game on my trusty C64 but never got anywhere with it," says Boyd. "I was the captain of the winning team of the final







» [Amiga] The foreboding castle you have to explore.



» [Amiga] *Knightmare's* 16-bit outing was created by Tony Crowther, who also developed *Captive*. You can easily see the similarities.

series. It is a shame that our win is not universally accepted – we found a short cut past level 2 – but what can I say? We beat the dungeon that the production team gave us and overcame the hardest puzzles that *Knightmare* ever had, so we earned the win.

"Nich, the previous webmaster who created the site, was looking for someone to take over. I had a few ideas for improvements that could be made to the site and was desperate to encourage some of the fantastic community-led projects that had taken place in previous years, so I applied." Boyd is in no doubt about what made the series special: "It was way ahead of its time in terms of its use of technology – compounded when you remember that *Knightmare* was a limited-budget children's game show! I think the other special thing was its no-nonsense approach to losing. The production team didn't pull any punches and it was rare for a team to win. That really made it exciting to watch, knowing that the present team could die at any time. Add in the originality, the writing and the format, and you really are left with a masterpiece."

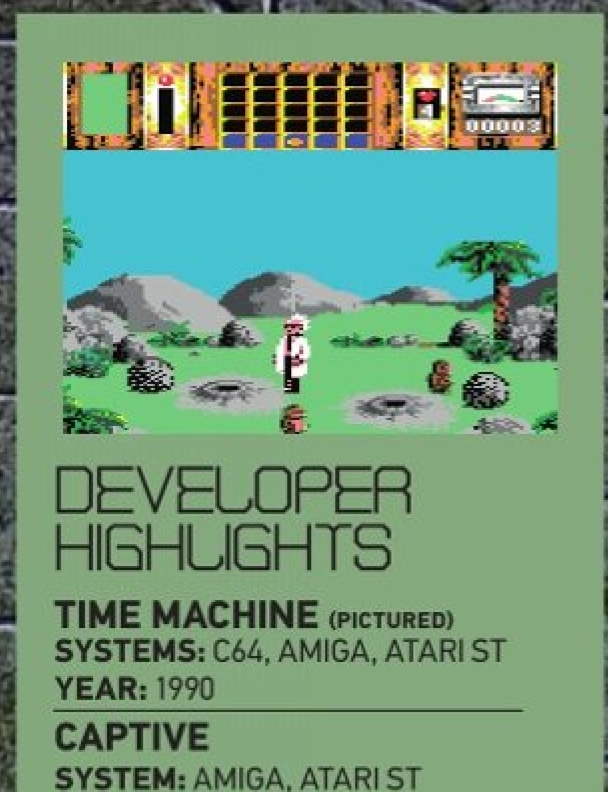
Everyone agreed that they would love to see the show return to our screens. Boyd explains: "We're actually looking into the possibility of buying distribution rights to *Knightmare* ourselves, which would allow us to release it to the public. Creating *Knightmare* in a new form is always a difficult topic. Most people wouldn't want to see it changed. But realistically, changes in technology and the need to keep things fresh make it a requirement."

"I knew how it should play so went my way, then Tim would pull me back in line with the show"

Jon Dean and Mev Dinc have similar ideas. Dean says: "A new version with the latest CG techniques, and perhaps a way for players to interact via phones or Facebook – maybe influence the outcome somehow. That might be fun. Keep the original essence of the show but update it." Dinc concurs: "I am sure a more modern version with top-notch technology and visuals could be successful. But as for the game, a slightly updated Facebook version could be fun. Any offers?"

The final words belong to Treguard. "It is extraordinary how *Knightmare* just lives on and on," says Myatt. "The show was a product of its time, even if it was ahead of its time. It had up to 5 million viewers. Very few programmes today get those sort of figures, especially 'children's' programmes. It was also very expensive to make, getting close to the cost of drama. What made *Knightmare* so exciting was the technical necessity of the dungeoneer being blindfolded. Technology has moved on exponentially. The blindfold measure would be unnecessary and probably unacceptable today. I am not sure, though, that the same sense of excitement and suspense could be generated without it. Of course, if it were to be revived on TV it would have to have the grandson of Treguard, or else me in a long white beard, hobbling about with a stick."

With thanks to Dan Whitehead and Alan Boyd. Background graphics and other paintings courtesy of David Rowe (see www.davidrowe.net).



DEVELOPER HIGHLIGHTS

TIME MACHINE (PICTURED)
SYSTEMS: C64, AMIGA, ATARI ST
YEAR: 1990

CAPTIVE
SYSTEM: AMIGA, ATARI ST
YEAR: 1990



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Macintosh SE
FDHD



The Bluffer's Guide To

Mac Gaming:

For years, the Macintosh has been the laughing stock among gamers, perhaps second only to the Virtual Boy, the popular belief being that it's a machine designed only for musicians and graphic artists. Though it's true that it has struggled, the Macintosh has always provided plenty of avenues for the gamer and, as Andrew Gray reveals, has even been home to landmark moments





It's ironic that with all the claims over the years that the Macintosh has no games, it was in fact birthed thanks to one.

In 1976 Steve Wozniak, co-founder of Apple with Steve Jobs, developed a prototype of *Breakout* for Atari, many features of which would go into the creation of the Apple II, such as graphics and sound circuitry. This eventually led to the development and release of the original Macintosh on 24 January 1984, a fact referenced years later in Mac System 7 with a secret *Breakout* clone hidden in the OS.

This original Macintosh, released at the price of $2,495 US, was designed to provide competent graphical performance at a reasonable price, aiming for the home market. It was powered by an 8MHz Motorola microprocessor and 128KB of RAM.

The included keyboard lacked arrow, numeric and function keys, which was a deliberate choice as Apple wanted software designed for its fancy GUI, not lazy ports from other systems, though all keys would be added on later keyboards. It was also the first personal computer with a floppy drive that took 400KB 3.5-inch disks. But perhaps most notable was the inclusion of a mouse and graphical user interface.

The Xerox Alto GUI was a strong inspiration for the latter, so much so that Apple faced much criticism when it tried to sue companies that later modelled GUIs after Mac OS. The Macintosh was, however, the first commercially successful personal computer to include these features.

At first, Apple avoided games on its new machine amid fears that it would be perceived by the public as a toy due to the two previously mentioned features, rather than a big, serious productivity machine. Despite this, a simple sliding puzzle application written by Andy Hertzfeld, aptly titled *Puzzle*, was included with the first public release of what would become Mac OS. That's right: there have always been games on the Macintosh, dispelling the myth of the opposite immediately.

Of course, it was hardly anything to show off to your work chums, but the first commercial game also wasn't far away. In fact, it was released the same year as the Macintosh. Originally called *Alice* and later retitled *Through The Looking Glass*, it was a new take on chess similar to *Archon*, which demonstrated the potential of the system with an impressive 3D board and scaling sprites.

It was a commercial failure, partly due to Apple's reluctance to market it. Meanwhile, few other games were released for the first Macintosh, primarily because of the low RAM and lack of expandability – one of the design choices that kept the price down. The former was quickly rectified with the Macintosh 512, released on 10 September 1984 and, as the name suggests, with the RAM expanded to 512KB.

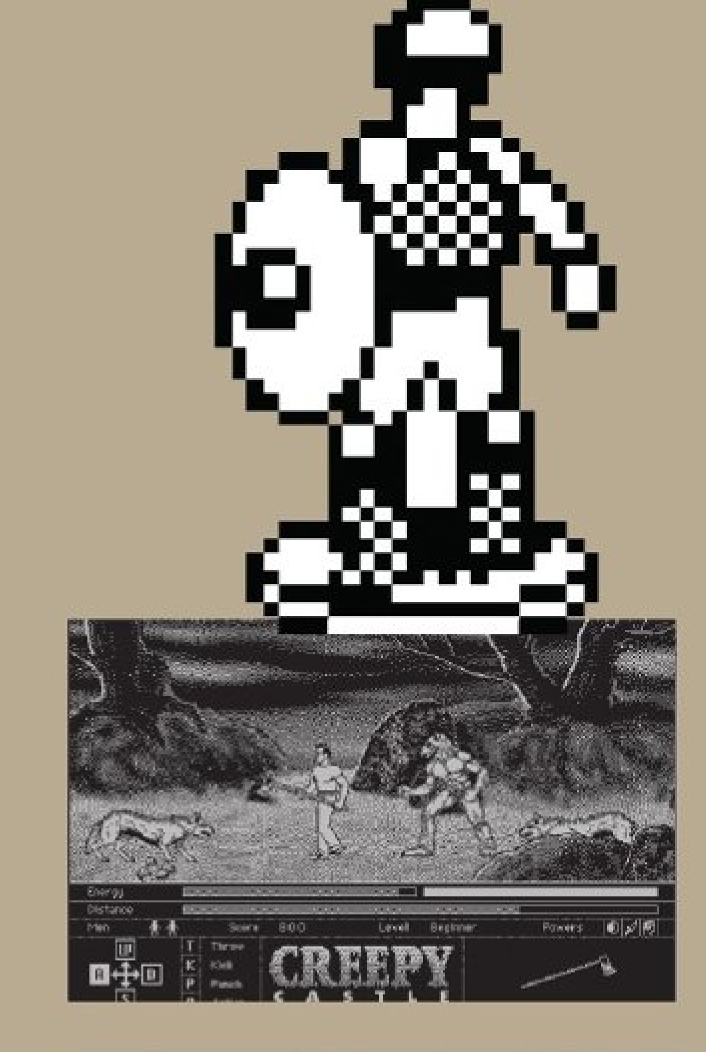
GAME ON

In these early days the Macintosh generally received black-and-white ports of slower-paced games, namely RPGs and adventures. Among the ported were the *Wizardry* series, *SimCity*, the *Bard's Tale* series, *Wasteland*, *Karateka*, *Defender Of The Crown*, *Leisure Suit Larry*, *The Hitchhiker's Guide To The Galaxy*, *Might & Magic*, *The Last Ninja* and many, many more.

But the Macintosh didn't just get ports. In fact, there were a few revolutionary original titles released on the system. A lot of these breakthroughs were due to the fact that the Macintosh was the first successful computer where the GUI and mouse was a necessity rather than an accessory.

For example, *Dark Castle* was the first game to employ the WASD keys for movement while using the mouse for aiming, predicting the preferred setup for first-person shooters. A contributing factor to this creation was the lack of arrow keys on early keyboards.

Bus'd Out is an early example of a networked first-person shooter, though hardly the first, and *Déjà Vu* used an innovative GUI that would inspire the LucasArts SCUMM engine. The Mac









also played host to the first CD-ROM game, Cyan's *The Manhole*.

The Colony, a first-person action-adventure, was among the first of its kind to allow players to move around in real-time 3D and was also the first to feature vehicles that could be driven.

A number of classic games also originated on the Mac. *Shufflepuck Café*, the unique science fiction air hockey game, was a Mac original again, primarily thanks to the mouse. Cliff Johnson's meta-puzzler, *The Fool's Errand*, was another Mac first, as was Chris Crawford's geopolitical simulator, *Balance Of Power*.

The Mac was even gifted with a few exclusive games from these greats. Johnson released *3 In Three*, a tale about a number 3 lost in a computer with less traditional puzzles than *The Fool's Errand*. Crawford released *Trust & Betrayal: The Legacy Of Siboot*, an incredibly original game about forming trust with NPCs and deciding what one should do with that power.

Infocom even released an exclusive game on the system in the form of *Quarterstaff: The Tomb Of Setmoth*, an RPG that made extensive use of Mac OS's GUI capabilities.

Things progressed smoothly on the technology side too. The Macintosh II was the first one to feature colour in 1987, and the Quadra line was introduced on 21 October 1991 with the Motorola 68040 CPU. The first 700 and 900 models ran at 25MHz, with memory that could be expanded to 64MB. CD-ROM drives also became available, the first built-in one included in the LC 520, released in June 1993.

With this spiffy new CD technology, new games emerged to take advantage of it. *Spaceship Warlock* was released in 1991, being one of the first designed specifically for the medium. The creators would later develop the sadly ignored multimedia extravaganza *Total Distortion*.

Cyberflix created technology allowing data to be streamed from CDs at speeds fast enough to play games such as *Lunicus* and *Jump Raven* straight from the disc, something previously considered impossible for action games.

Then, of course, there was *Myst* in 1993, which, together with *The 7th Guest* and *Star Wars: Rebel Assault*, would become a killer app for CD-ROM drives. *Myst* has also been accused of being the killer of the adventure genre. Whether this is true or not is still debated, but one thing that is for certain is that it helped sell a lot of Macs and paved the way for the vastly superior sequel, *Riven*.

ROTTING APPLE

But this wasn't enough. With the release of Microsoft Windows 3.0 in 1990, which offered similar functionality and at a cheaper price, the Mac was rapidly losing market share. Apple was also confusing consumers with too many similar models on the market at the same time. This only got worse during the mid-Nineties with Windows 95. With this dwindling popularity, many game companies abandoned the system, and the ones that stayed had

The Apple Crunch

MOST MACINTOSH MACHINES feature famously – or infamously, depending on your outlook – closed architecture, so there hasn't ever been much of a market for third-party sound cards. Instead, Mac fans have had to depend on what Apple provided them with.

The original Macintosh was capable of mono 8-bit sound and 22MHz sampling. Later models such as the Macintosh II would introduce stereo output. This technology, in addition to the point-and-click interface of the OS, led to Digidesign launching the first digital audio workstation system for the Mac in 1989.

Titled Sound Tools (later Sound Designer), it was described as the first tapeless recording studio by the company. This was used to edit audio samples for sampling keyboards, and soon went on to be used for simple two-track audio editing and CD mastering. The Macintosh would continue to this day to be a crucial part of many recording studios.

Of course, this technology also allowed high-quality sound in games, such as many crisp voice samples heard in *Dark Castle* way back in 1986.

Over the years various small additions and changes would occur to sound hardware, most being of little use to the casual user but incredibly valuable to audio engineers, such as anti-aliasing filters and analogue-to-digital converters for sound input.

It wasn't until the original Quadra's release in 1991 that the Macintosh finally received 16-bit sound output.

From monochrome to millions

THE ORIGINAL MACINTOSH had a built-in display, which was a 1-bit black-and-white 9-inch CRT, with a resolution of 512x342, establishing the desktop publishing standard of 72 pixels per inch.

Yes, it lacked colour, but it did allow some wonderfully detailed visuals first seen in *Through The Looking Glass*, and many fans find a certain charm to the aesthetic.

This standard would continue until March 1986 with the release of the cunningly named Macintosh II, pictured on the right. It shipped with a number of exciting new features, such as expandability and a new Motorola microprocessor that helped make it the first 32-bit Macintosh.



The most notable change, of course, was the addition of colour. A whole 256 of them displayed at 640x480 resolution on a beautiful 13-inch monitor, to be precise. But this was only with the default hardware. With a graphics card expansion, it was capable of displaying a whopping 16.7 million colours, providing photorealistic visuals. As with all new exciting technology, one of the first uses of this was, of course, digital pornography.

If all this weren't enough, it was also the first computer in history to support multiple monitors. All these things put the Mac far ahead of IBM when it came to visuals for many years to come.

In 1991, the Quadra line was released, bumping the maximum resolution to a huge 1280x1024, which remains a standard today.







to deal with problems such as tiny, if any, shelf space.

Gamers themselves became a problem, with piracy and the popularity of file-sharing programs such as Hotline, despite the fact that a Mac user pirating games was like a starving man eating his own head for sustenance. Even hardware wasn't safe, with some users using third-party Mac drivers for PC video cards, rather than shelling out the extra cost for ones designed specifically for Apple's machine. Even crazier, a hobbyist managed to obtain the source code to *Quake* and ported it to Mac OS for the hell of it, indirectly damaging sales of the commercial port released later.



» [Mac] *Nanosaur*'s launch coincided with the original iMac, showing that Apple was positioning it as a gaming platform.

"Apple wanted software designed for its fancy GUI, not lazy ports from other systems"

Other companies tried to capitalise on Mac gamers' cravings for games. Insignia Solutions released SoftWindows, an emulator of x86 hardware that allows Microsoft's OS to run on Macs. Orange Micro even released a PC card designed specifically for playing PC games on a Mac called PCfx!. These solutions were last resorts, however, as Mac users wanted games that offered the usability and functionality of their OS of choice and avoid listening to the Windows 95 startup sound, which tended to upset canines.

Despite these problems, there were those who stayed and fought. Blizzard, Bungie, Changeling, Graphic Simulations, LucasArts, MacPlay, MacSoft, Parsoft Interactive and Starplay Productions got together and formed the Mac Entertainment Software Association (MESA), and a group of indie developers formed Bunch Media, joining together under the one banner. It was a bit like Gathering Of Developers on the PC, except all the money wasn't spent on extravagant E3 parties.

Still, the flow of games slowly dried up, making it indeed seem as if there were no games on the system, but this did have some advantages. For one, the Mac only got the cream of the crop. Hit PC games such as *Syndicate*, *System Shock*, *Civilization II*, *Command & Conquer*, *Doom*, *Day Of The Tentacle*, *Deus Ex* and plenty more received Mac releases. Additionally, when released – admittedly often quite a lot later than the PC counterpart – they included new features, such as overhauled interfaces or support for higher resolutions.

Wolfenstein 3D was basically completely remade, featuring vastly higher resolution visuals, an enhanced soundtrack, new levels, two new weapons and an auto-map. On the downside, the enemies were always facing the player and didn't patrol areas, unlike in the DOS original.

Descent featured a new Red Book soundtrack, which was so fantastic that Good Old Games now includes it as an extra with the purchase of the game. *Duke Nukem 3D* had a few new features such as being able to record personal taunts and even a Mac-exclusive Easter egg, allowing players to watch the famous Ridley Scott-directed '1984' commercial on the cinema in the first level. Sure, most people would

Back on the Mac

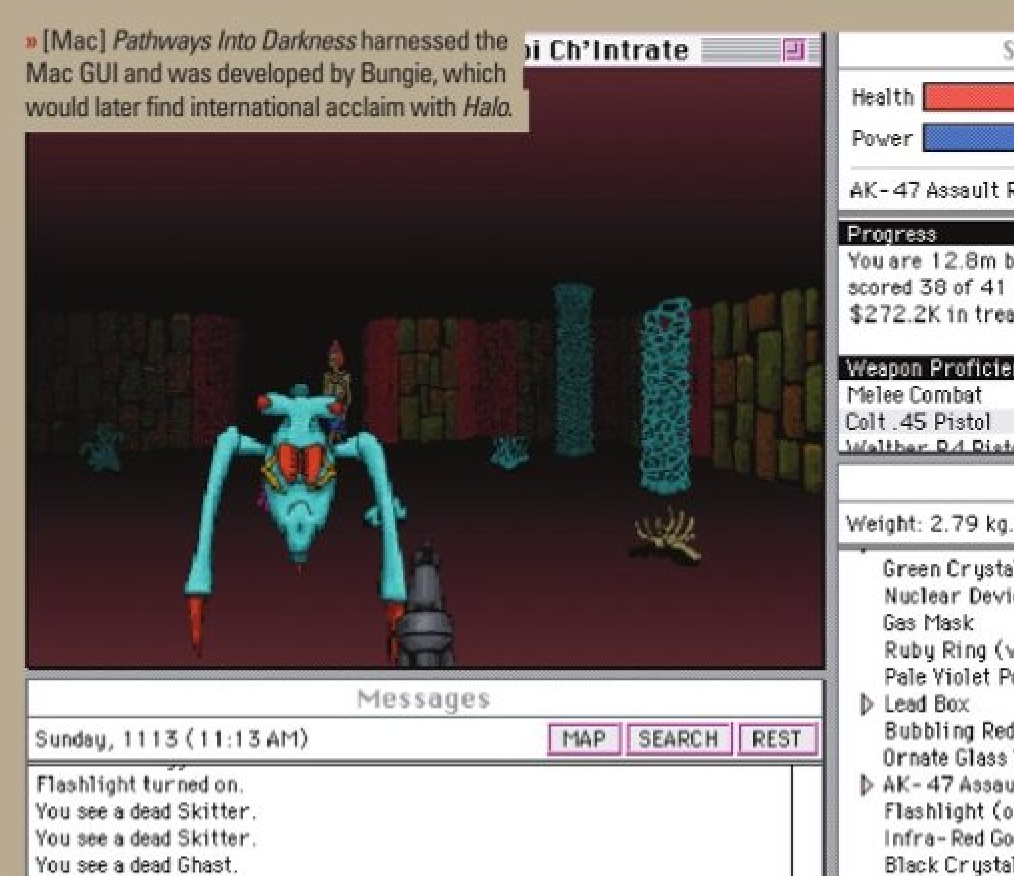
THE MACINTOSH HAS always prided itself on its user-friendliness, so much so that it practically invites the user into bed, and fortunately this is one thing that has carried over to Macintosh emulation. Not only is it easy to set up an emulator; it's also generally not too difficult configuring higher functions such as connecting them to the internet, allowing anyone to play their favourite old multiplayer game or enjoy obsolete browsers and protocols.

To play with Macintosh software on a Windows machine, you only need two things: an emulator and a system disk, neither of which is terribly hard to find. It's also recommended to create a virtual hard drive if you don't want to keep swapping around disk images, though we understand if it's part of the nostalgia. The program HFVExplorer is perfect for this.

There are three main emulators available, and the choice of which to use depends on the era of Macintosh history that you wish to explore.

vMac is best suited for ye olde Macs with black-and-white displays. Plenty of classics can be played on here, such as *Scarab Of Ra*, *Continuum* and *The Colony*. For the later colour-display Macs with 68K architecture, such as the Performa and Quadra range, Basilisk II is a prime choice. Finally, for the PowerPC line of Macs, SheepShaver is at your service.

All these emulators are also available for Mac OS X, allowing modern Mac maniacs to play the classic games of yore.



» [Mac] *Pathways Into Darkness* harnessed the Mac GUI and was developed by Bungie, which would later find international acclaim with *Halo*.

EIGHT IMPORTANT MAC GAMES



MARATHON TRILOGY
» **Released:** 1994, 1995, 1996
» **Publisher:** Bungie Software
» **Developer:** In-house
» **By the same developer:** *Halo*

■ After creating the Mac's answer to both *Ultima Underworld* and *Wolfenstein 3D* with first-person adventure *Pathways Into Darkness*, Bungie took on the might of id Software's *Doom* with the first *Marathon*.

Although it had other features that gave it an identity of its own, the major addition to the genre that *Marathon* brought was an emphasis on story. *Marathon: Durandal* then explored world-building in videogames, before *Marathon Infinity* ended the series with one of the most daring and experimental commercial FPSs ever released. They're playable on modern hardware through the Aleph One fan project.

THE MANHOLE
» **Released:** 1988
» **Publisher:** Brøderbund
» **Developer:** Cyan Worlds
» **By the same developer:** *Cosmic Osmo And The Worlds Beyond The Mackerel*

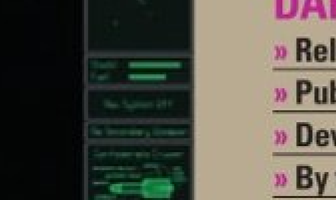
■ Cyan's *The Manhole* is important for several reasons. First, not only was it the first game available on CD-ROM for the Macintosh, but it was the first game available on CD-ROM full stop.

It was also Cyan's first game, though the company labelled it as "explortainment" because there was no goal. Instead, the player was free to explore and play in a surreal fantasy world, with the only aim being to have a blasted good time.

The game's design also led to *Myst*, but don't hold that against it.







ESCAPE VELOCITY
» **Released:** 1996
» **Publisher:** Ambrosia Software
» **Developer:** In-house
» **By the same developer:** *Avara*

■ Matt Burch helped make PC gamers jealous with *Escape Velocity*, an epic space adventure that took the missions, trading and exploration from games like *Privateer*, mixing them up with arcade combat reminiscent of *Spacewar!*.

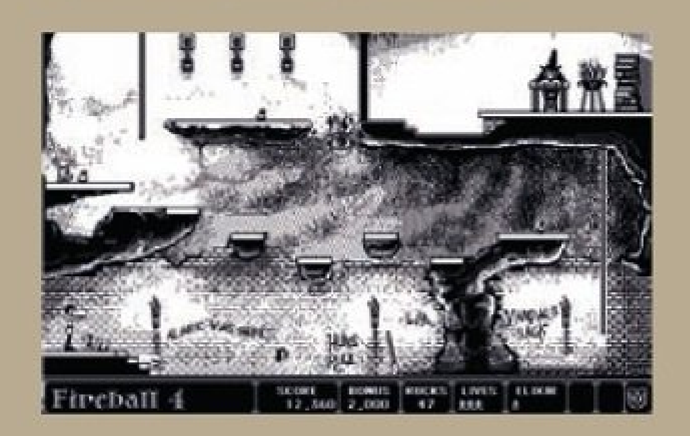
Players could take part in an expansive story, or just accept smaller missions and live a life of their choice, and that included taking over the entire galaxy.

Additionally, it had strong support for user-created content through an innovative plug-in system, and extensions are still being made for the latest game in the series, *Escape Velocity Nova*, originally released in 2002.

DARK CASTLE
» **Released:** 1986
» **Publisher:** Silicon Beach Software
» **Developer:** In-house
» **By the same developer:** *Airborne!*

■ Despite being a platformer, *Dark Castle* pioneered the WASD plus mouse control method that is now the standard for navigating 3D environments on a home computer game, and it also showed the arcade gaming potential of the Macintosh to the world. It featured detailed animations and comedic voice samples that gave it the feeling of an interactive cartoon and hinted at what would become the cinematic platformer.

Another important aspect was the puzzles. Even if they were often as simple as a Windows user, they gave an extra feeling of adventure to a genre usually lacking brains entirely.





probably rather watch the cheerleader bounce her pompoms, but it was still a nice touch.

There were also plenty of alternative gaming methods available. For example, many games, especially first-person shooters, were expandable, featuring fields of user-created content, such as the Mac-created *Batman Doom* – the creators of which would later create first-person man-thumper *Zeno Clash*.

But there was another huge avenue of gaming that is largely ignored: the shareware and freeware scene. Games of this nature thrived on the Macintosh, partly because of the number of tools available to creators. Things like Apple's HyperCard, which helped popularise hypertext, was used by Cyan while creating *Myst* and required little programming skill. Another was World Builder, an adventure game creator that led to cult classics such as *Radical Castle* and Ray Dunkin's *Maze* trilogy. Ingemar Ragnemalm's Sprite Animation Toolkit also provided support.

Among the most remembered shareware games are *Scarab Of Ra*, a graphical roguelike where the player is an archaeologist exploring a pyramid while being hassled by monkeys; *System's Twilight*, a *Fool's Errand*-esque puzzler taking place in a digital fantasy world; the *Exile* trilogy, a series of sprawling RPGs; and *Avara*, a cult multiplayer FPS involving robots blowing up other robots.

On the shadier side of gaming, there was also a large number of high-functioning emulators available for retro gamers, immediately opening up huge avenues of gaming.

Original Mac games would also continue to be released, including the wonderful *Tempest 2000* meets *Robotron* meets *Sinistar* meets *Defender* arcade game, *Battle-Girl*, though it would later receive a Windows release. There was also, of course, Bungie's *Marathon*, and the company continued to support the Mac with releases of *Myth*, *Oni* and eventually, despite a buyout by Microsoft, *Halo*.

Finally, many older games ran well on modern machines, allowing anyone to dive back into history and enjoy some black-and-white gaming.

> "Apple was struggling by this time, and it needed to save itself. And that's just what it did"

SWEET APPLE TALK

It was this era when people accused Apple of ignoring gaming, making no effort to appear at important shows such as E3 and providing little support to remaining game companies. Of course, it was Apple as a company in general that was struggling by this time, and first it needed to save itself. And that's just what it did.

In 1996, Steve Jobs returned to the company he co-founded, and injected it with miracle juice, starting with the famous 'Think Different' marketing campaign and the new all-in-one bondi blue iMac computer, released later in 1998.

But Apple also included high-end games on the iMac, such as Pangea Software's *Nanosaur* and Shiny's third-person shooter, *MDK*. It was telling people that its machine could



» [Mac] *Shufflepuck Café* first appeared on the Mac.





CRYSTAL QUEST

» **Released:** 1987
» **Publisher:** Casady & Greene
» **Developer:** Patrick Buckland
» **By the same developer:** *Carmageddon*

■ *Crystal Quest* was one of, if not the, first arcade games designed specifically for mouse control, and to this day is one of the best, ignoring a terrible Xbox Live Arcade version. It was also the first Mac game to be playable in colour for those with the bottomless pockets required for a full colour setup for their Macintosh II, and it even included a 'critter editor' to allow the design of custom enemies.

What made the gameplay memorable was that it combined frantic arcade gameplay with delicacy, the player having to make smooth mouse movements to avoid collisions due to the game's exaggerated inertia.

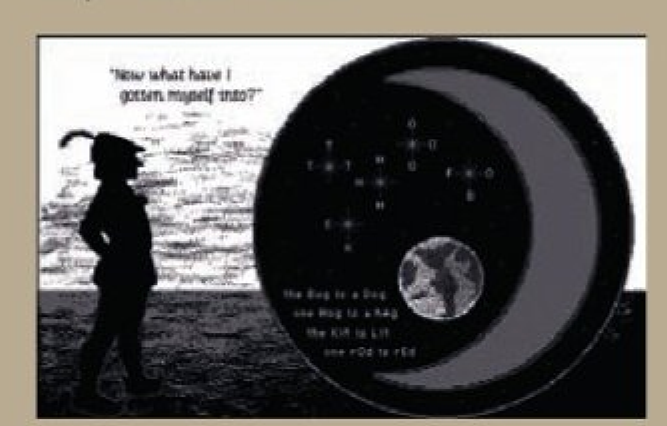
THE FOOL'S ERRAND

» **Released:** 1987
» **Publisher:** Miles Computing
» **Developer:** Clive Johnson
» **By the same developer:** *At The Carnival*

■ One of the greatest meta-puzzle games of all time, *The Fool's Errand* is almost too clever for its own good, making incredible use of the videogame medium.

Featuring traditional puzzles such as anagrams and crosswords, it also had more experimental puzzles, including a card game in which the player had to figure out the scoring rules.

Puzzles are tied together with a story, with solutions that feature pictures portraying scenes and clues to other puzzles, or logically leading the player through to the following chapters in the narrative.





GLIDER PRO

» **Released:** 1991
» **Publisher:** Casady & Greene
» **Developer:** John Calhoun
» **By the same developer:** *Pararena*

■ *Glider* was originally a black-and-white arcade game about moving from left to right. *Glider Pro* added colour, expansive levels and a level editor.

It was the original gameplay that hooked players in the first place, though. They guided a fragile paper aeroplane through a hazard-filled house, using vents to elevate while collecting bonuses.

Another memorable feature of the game was the ability to interact with incidental background objects, such as switches that would turn on lights and fans, and even guitars that could be strummed.

BOLO

» **Released:** 1989
» **Publisher:** Stuart Cheshire
» **Developer:** Stuart Cheshire
» **By the same developer:** None

■ Originally appearing on the BBC Micro, the Macintosh version is one of the platform's most fondly remembered multiplayer games, right next to *Spectre*.

Up to 16 players could take their tanks and harvest trees, build bases, plant pillboxes, and form and break alliances, all in order to seize control of the bases on the map. Its network multiplayer implementation was considered revolutionary at the time

'Bolo' is the Hindi word for 'communication', which is fitting since it's a game about talking to the other players, either with words or, perhaps more effectively, explosives.



and would play games. To make sure it could, inside was an integrated ATI Rage IIc processor with 2MB of SGRAM memory and a 233MHz CPU.

Jobs held interviews with various gaming publications, telling them that Apple was going to focus its attention on gaming, providing development tools such as Game Sprockets for developers and making showings at E3. It certainly made progress, but many people believed it wasn't enough, with Apple continuing its habit of one step forward, two steps back and not following through with its ideas.

The release of Mac OS X in 2001 damaged the shareware scene greatly by making lots of older tools unusable, but bigger developers such as John Carmack of id Software would find the operating system inviting, being a nice midway between the flexibility of Unix and the uniform design of Windows. In fact, the first public beta of *Quake III Arena* was released exclusively for the Mac, putting a damper in PC gamers' pants all over the world.

This, combined with the resurgence in popularity of the Mac, started attracting game developers back to the machine. It never even came close to matching the PC in releases, but people could stop fearing a complete death.

In 2006, Apple introduced the new line of Intel Macs, which was a double-edged sword. It made porting games from Windows to OS X easier due to the sharing of hardware architectures, but then why bother when users can just boot into Windows and play games there natively?

Despite all these problems, things are looking better now than they have in a long time. More ports of commercial games have been arriving on the Mac and there is strong support for the machine from indie developers, such as 2D Boy, creator of *World Of Goo*.

The App Store was introduced to the Mac platform earlier this year, which should allow plenty of games to be as easily distributed as they are on the iOS devices. There is concern that it will just be casual games available, but for more hardcore gaming needs, Valve has also released its Steam distribution platform and has started to port its games – including the *Half-Life*, *Portal* and *Left 4 Dead* series – over, making available yet another way for companies to make their games available on the Macintosh.

APPLES TO APPLES

It's been a long, hard struggle for the Macintosh, not just for its games but for the machine in general, surviving against all odds after a short, early reign. However, the future is looking bright.

Was Apple's Macintosh ever a prime machine for gaming? Not particularly. Will it ever be? It's unlikely. But the games have always been there, even if sometimes users had to look for them. Not only that, but occasionally the modest machine even provided gaming experiences that weren't offered anywhere else.

The Pippin

IN 1995, APPLE teamed up with Bandai to create the cumbersomely named Apple Bandai Pippin. It was basically a very stripped down Power Mac, featuring a 66MHz processor and a 14.4Kb/s modem, and it ran a custom version of Mac OS 7.5.2.

The aim was to create a cheap computer that primarily played CD multimedia titles, mostly games, but could also function as a network computer. Despite these intentions, it effectively ended up being a videogame console for the most part.

It was a total failure, with Bandai ceasing production before even 100,000 units were made, making accessories outnumber the consoles. Reasons for this were that it was much more expensive than the already dominant 32-bit consoles at $599 US and had very little software, most created by Bandai itself apart from a few exceptions, such as *Super Marathon*, a port of the first two games in the FPS trilogy.





FROM THE ARCHIVES

RETRO GAMER DIGS UP THE FILES OF THE CLASSIC COMPANIES OF OLD

Westwood Studios

Despite humble origins in a suburban garage in Las Vegas, Westwood went on to redefine strategy videogaming with titles like Eye Of The Beholder, Dune II and the mighty Command & Conquer. Mike Bevan spoke to founders Brett Sperry and Louis Castle to find out what went right...

It all started through a mutual appreciation of the Apple II. Louis Castle had managed to save up the $2,100 to buy one after working long summers with the Parks Service in Las Vegas for $1.25 an hour. "I remember very clearly being hooked on the vibrant colour on the screens," he says. "I was an art student and was trying to do cubism and very flat fields of colour with paint. I couldn't believe how easy it was to do the same on a computer. I was pretty sure I was going to be an architect, but when I saw computers being used for drafting I decided to put my hobby to good use and learn programming. Once I started doing artwork on computers with my own programming, I just couldn't get as excited about architecture any more."

After a stint studying fine arts and computer science at the University of Nevada, Louis took a job as a salesman for a local computer dealer, Century 23, home to a small but vibrant community of self-styled Apple fanatics. "Brett was a customer and one day he needed a printout," recalls Louis. "I owned a printer so I invited him over and he looked at some animation and programming I was working on. The rest, as they say, is history."

"I was working as an independent game programmer," remembers Westwood co-founder Brett Sperry. "We met at the store through a group of mutual friends who were very active self-taught programmers. Not everyone was working on the Apple II; some worked on the Commodore 64 and other systems, but I remember that everyone was working on his dream project. I was fascinated by the graphical capabilities of computers, and once I saw how relatively easy it was to manipulate the graphics on the Apple, that was it. All kinds of doors opened in my mind."

It was 1984, and the first generation of 8-bit home computers were about to give way to the 16-bit platforms. "I had been working for companies such as Epyx, iMagic and a local company called ACT, and I was interested in starting my own software company," says Brett. "So I broached the idea to Louis on a hiking trip in Yosemite. He was a bit hesitant at first, because he had just started working as an independent contractor himself, but eventually agreed, as we were both interested in developing projects that were 16-bit, which was the next wave of computer graphics."



INSTANT EXPERT

Westwood was formed by Louis Castle and Brett Sperry in 1985. The pair initially worked out of a converted garage in Donner Street, Las Vegas.

One of Brett Sperry's early contract programming jobs prior to founding Westwood was porting *Impossible Mission* to the Apple II.

In its early days, Westwood handled a number of 16-bit computer ports for Epyx, starting with *The Temple Of Apshai Trilogy*. It also developed titles for Electronic Arts and Strategic Simulations. The company's first original product, *Mars Saga*, was published by EA in 1988.

Westwood was a major pioneer of the real-time strategy (RTS) genre, with games such as *Eye Of The Beholder*, *Dune II*, *Command & Conquer* and *Red Alert*.

The original company name, Westwood Associates, was changed to Westwood Studios in 1992, when the developer became a subsidiary of Virgin Interactive Entertainment.

Conversion capers

"We were looking for a name for our new venture and wanted something that did not commit us exclusively to games, since we both had done some professional work for doctors, lawyers and the like," says Louis. "Westwood, CA, was 'the' place back in 1985 where Hollywood mixed with youth culture at the gates of UCLA. I frequently took trips from Vegas just to hang out in the area. So, we chose Westwood Associates as the company name, to capture some

you may be able to assist us ... dusty, little planet.

THE LION KING

“Once I saw how easy it was to manipulate the graphics on the Apple II, that was it”

APPLE CLAIMS ANOTHER VICTIM, AND THE ROAD TO WESTWOOD BEGINS



of the feeling of youthful energy and Hollywood business, although Westwood was founded in and always remained headquartered in Las Vegas."

The duo's first project, a role-playing dungeon adventure, was serendipitous given Westwood's later specialisation in the strategy and adventure market. "Bob Lindsay, a director of development at Epyx, gave me my first big break as an independent contractor, so he was the first person I called when Louis and I started Westwood," recalls Brett. "Bob gave us *The Temple Of Apshai Trilogy*, which was just a conversion at first. But we jumped at the chance, because we knew we could do it in under a month."

"Epyx gave us a great deal of latitude with our first games since we were essentially re-imagining them for the 16-bit platforms," says Louis. "We did run into a couple of snags. For example, our first playable build of *Temple Of Apshai Trilogy* for the Mac ran in real-time instead of the original turn-based play. Epyx felt it was too great of a departure and that gamers would not want to have to make complicated tactical and strategic decisions under pressure. Heh."

The Temple Of Asphai Trilogy made just $18,000 for Westwood, barely enough to cover expenses, but further projects for Epyx followed, including the Atari ST conversion of *Super Cycle* and ports of *Winter Games*, *World Games* and *California Games*. "When we started working on the *Games* projects there was a great deal more interaction," says Louis. "Since we re-created the games instead of porting the code we often embellished things behind the scenes. Of course, graphics and sound had to be redone, but we also added better physics models and more realistic sound processing whenever we could."

"The early years were dominated by an incredible passion and love for programming, to the exclusion of pretty much anything else," admits Brett. "We bootstrapped ourselves up by doing quick ports for other companies at first, which was kind of misleading, because people thought we only did ports. However, when you took a hit product and ported it to 16-bit, it was a lot of work. We ended up completely rewriting the games, trying to stay true to the originals but turning them into these beautiful 16-bit creations. It was great, though; we were living the dream, running our own company, being our own bosses, and I've never worked harder. Of course, everyone was working for very little money because all the money we got we just poured back to the company. There was always another computer to buy, better sound cards, synthesizers and more."

BY THE NUMBERS

2 The number of CD-ROMs that the PC version of *Command & Conquer* came generously packed with, allowing two people to play against each other.

10 Levels in the SNES version of *The Lion King*.

20 Unique units that can be deployed across both GDI and NOD factions in *Command & Conquer*.

32 The maximum number of units that can be constructed in the Amiga version of *Dune II*.

231 The number of locations in *The Legend Of Kyrandia: Book One*, including the mind-numbing Fireberry Cave maze…

130,000 Copies of *Eye Of The Beholder* sold, much to SSI's delight.

21 million The number of Westwood games in the *C&C* franchise sold by February 2003, when its final instalment, *Generals*, was released.

122.5 million The amount in US dollars that EA paid to acquire Westwood in 1998.

Branching out

Projects for other companies, including role-playing specialist and *Dungeons & Dragons* ▶



[PC] *The Legend Of Kyrandia*: That's the second-biggest dragon we've ever seen.

TIMELINE

1985 BRETT SPERRY AND LOUIS CASTLE FORM WESTWOOD ASSOCIATES

1986 AMIGA, ATARI ST AND APPLE MACINTOSH PORTS OF *TEMPLE OF APSHAI TRILOGY*, WESTWOOD'S FIRST CONVERSION PROJECT, ARE PUBLISHED BY EPYX

1988 WESTWOOD RELEASES *MARS SAGA*, THE COMPANY'S FIRST COMPLETELY ORIGINAL TITLE, DESIGNED BY LOUIS

WHERE ARE THEY NOW?

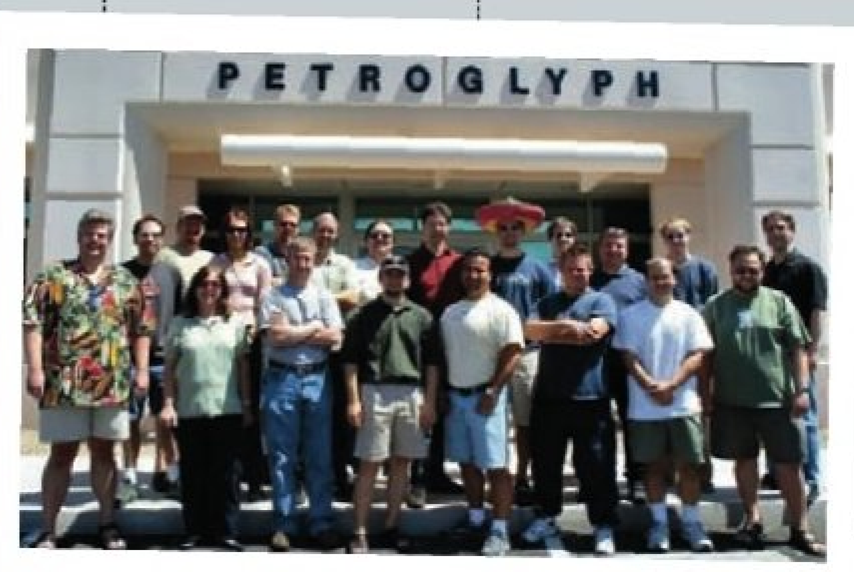


Brett Sperry
Brett is currently chief executive of Jet Set Games, a company he co-founded with ex-Westwood designer Rade Stojsavljevic. "Jet Set Games is an exciting company to me," he says. "When Rade and I founded it in 2008, my big goal was to create mobile entertainment. When the iPhone launched, I felt that everything was changing, and it was time to go back to pure, fun entertainment on the go. I love the idea of entertaining people with simple, quick games that are easy to get into and totally intuitive. And now, three years later, I'm even more excited because we're seeing the rise of tablet computing." Jet Set's *Highborn*, a fantasy turn-based strategy game with a social twist, made number one position on the iPad strategy games chart last year.

Louis Castle
Louis recently became VP of studios at social network game developer Zynga, of *FarmVille* and *CityVille* fame. "I'm very new at Zynga, but I can say that I'm very impressed with the values I see and especially the speed at which this company operates," he comments.



Petroglyph
When Electronic Arts disbanded Westwood in 2003, former employees rallied round and a new company, Petroglyph Games, rose from the ashes. Co-founded by Mike Legg – who joined Westwood in 1986 and worked on the *Kyrandia* trilogy, *Blade Runner* and *Lands Of Lore* – and Joe Bostic – lead programmer on *Dune II* and *Command & Conquer* – Petroglyph built a reputation for excellence in the RTS field with *Star Wars: Empire At War* and *Universe At War: Earth Assault*. Its forthcoming strategy game, *Rise Of The Immortals*, looks set to continue the trend.



licence-holder Strategic Simulations Inc saw an emerging trend in Westwood's direction. "We did a fantasy-style product called *Questron II* for SSI," says Brett. "Then we did *Mars Saga* for EA, designed by Louis, which was our first action/strategy game. But these products were very different from what had come before; both Louis and I had strong opinions about where games needed to go. We wanted to focus the company on RPG and strategy, but we felt the games we'd seen on the market were extremely arcane, hard to play with horrible graphics. I wanted to establish Westwood as developing visually strong products, so we hired artists in the first wave of employees, which was unheard of at the time. Ease of use was extremely important to me, and I would constantly challenge our programmers to simplify the interface. I wanted to play the game, not use my computer as a tool to manipulate it."

One SSI title that Louis is particularly fond of is *DragonStrike*, a 3D dragon-combat flight simulator set in the *AD&D* world of *Dragonlance*. "I have been a *D&D* fan since I was in sixth grade so I loved being able to add to the *Dragonlance* fiction," he says. "TSR was quite generous with their franchise and they allowed us to fill in the detail of the battles in their War of the Lance. It was the last title where I did all of the principal programming, and my last full 3D engine. *DragonStrike* used real-time fractal-generated terrain, flight mechanics and very good image compression, which I'm particularly proud of since it formed the baseline technology that allowed full-screen cinematic sequences for *C&C* and the real-time compositing and lighting in *Blade Runner*."

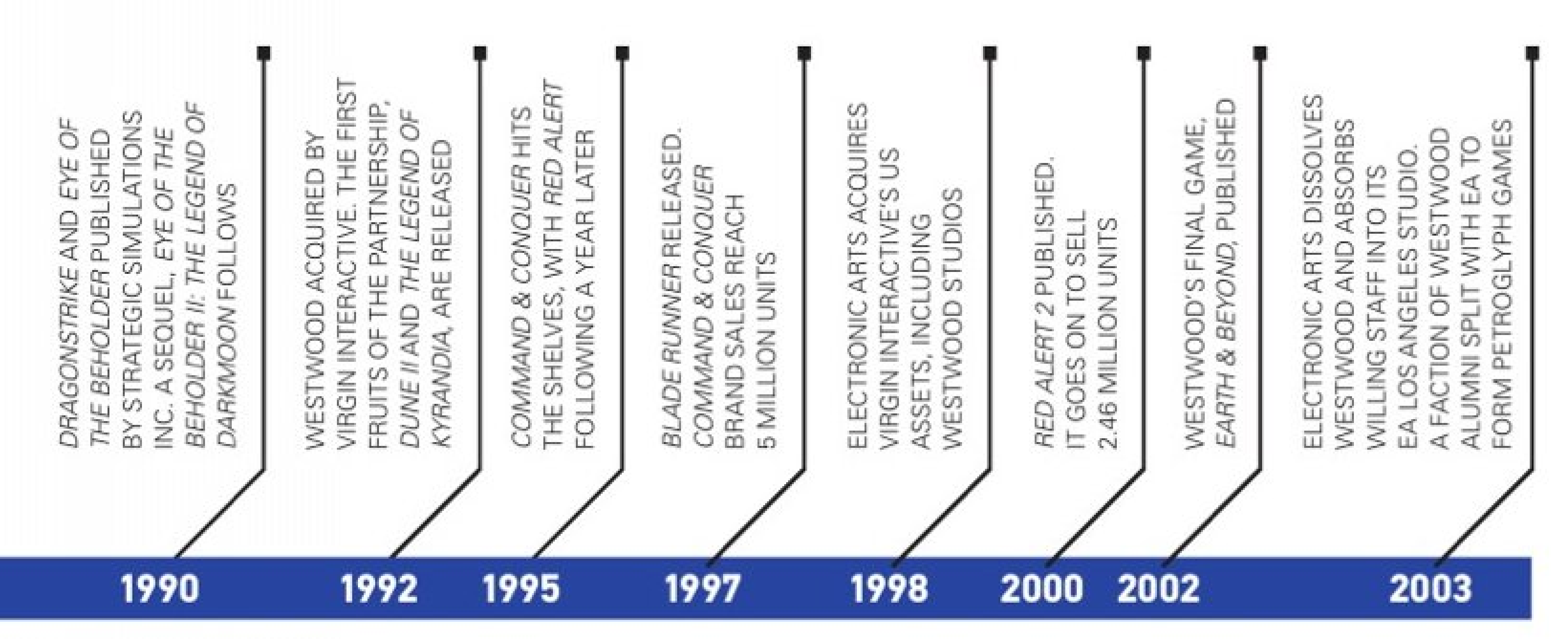
It was with SSI that Westwood also made perhaps its breakthrough in the strategy marketplace with the astonishing *Eye Of The Beholder*, a dungeon-crawling RPG set in the *D&D* universe that played like a 3D version of the canned real-time prototype of *Apshai Trilogy*. "I think *Eye Of The Beholder* is one of our proudest accomplishments from the early days," says Brett. "It was an original project I pitched to SSI, but I told them we'd need to bend a lot of the *D&D* rules to reinvent the game in a real-time 3D game space. But we kept the game in the spirit of how *D&D* was originally intended, and it was a huge hit. No one had seen anything like it before on the PC."

"The Atari ST game *Dungeon Master* was the inspiration to take that style of real-time gameplay and adapt it for computers and the *Advanced D&D* system," says Louis. "The conventional wisdom was that systems as complex as *D&D* needed to be turn-based. We obviously disagreed. The biggest challenge was making a game that was true to *D&D* but also played well. Brett did an amazing job on the GUI and our lead artist, Rick Parks, really set the visual bar to a whole new level."

"The interesting thing about *Eye Of The Beholder* was that we gained a whole new level of technology that really forced the company forward," says Brett. "We took what we had learned and turned our attention to one of my favourite categories – strategy. We wanted to figure out how to create a real-time experience for a top-down strategy game that was simple, fun, and had a lot of replay value. I think we built about 15 or 20 prototypes for that game, and the final product was *Dune II: Battle For Arrakis*."

The birth of real-time strategy

Westwood's most famous game design innovation came with the release of 1992's *Dune II*, the pioneering real-time strategy war game that paved the way for *Command & Conquer*. After *Eye*




» The *Eye Of The Beholder* team in 1991. Left to right: Aaron Powell, Joe Bostic, Phillip W Gorrow, Glenn Sperry, Paul Mudra, Bill Stokes, Rick Parks, Joseph B Hewitt.

Of The Beholder, the Westwood team had dabbled with the idea of producing a strategy title based on an original, non-*D&D* fantasy environment. "Brett and Joe Bostic both loved the game *Military Madness* on the NEC TurboGrafx and thought a game that included the strategy of *MM* with the real-time play of *Rescue Raiders* would be a hit," says Louis. "When Virgin offered up the *Dune* licence, that sealed our fate and pulled us away from a fantasy theme."

"I loved Frank Herbert's universe, so we partnered with Virgin Games, which had just cancelled an action/role-playing game that had been in development called *Dune*," explains Brett. "Ours was going to be a strategy game called *Dune: Battle For Arrakis*. We were most of the way done with development when the developer of the first *Dune* re-emerged. They had finished the game and wanted Virgin to publish it, which really frustrated me, since our game has nothing to do with the other product. But the market was very word-of-mouth, and people quickly realised that *Dune II* wasn't a sequel and was a very different, revolutionary game."

Another 1992 title, humorous adventure *The Legend Of Kyrandia*, sparked a chain of events that led to a widely publicised merger with Virgin Interactive later that year. "I had demoed *Kyrandia* to several people, including Ken Williams at Sierra and Martin Alper at Virgin, because we were funding the game ourselves," Brett continues. "We just had great success evolving the RPG and strategy genres, and wanted to do something fun with the fantasy adventure category. The big idea was to make the whole game point-and-click, instead of typing 'open door' or 'look rock', which I found ridiculous. That's how *Legend Of Kyrandia* was born. It was a fun story in a fun world that was all context-sensitive.

"I remember that both Ken and Martin loved the game so much that they both offered to buy the company, which I was actually kind of insulted by. We weren't in it for the money; we did it for the love of the craft. But Ken at Sierra offered to let us remain totally independent and I started to warm to the idea. At that time, costs were rising and I thought if we can have absolute control, improve everyone's salaries, give health benefits and have bigger budgets, it would be fantastic. But things went sideways when Ken sent the wrong person in to negotiate, who basically said we wouldn't be able to buy a pencil without approval.

"Virgin, however, was ready to deliver on that promise. Plus, we had a fantastic relationship with Martin from working on *Dune II*. Virgin was totally hands-off, but we were very responsible anyway, because we had grown the company ourselves and considered cash a precious resource. We were respected as artists and businessmen, had absolute creative control, and became our own publishing brand, which is what we wanted from the beginning: to be totally responsible for the success or failure of our projects in every regard, right down to the box design."

> **"Eye Of The Beholder was a huge hit. No one had seen anything like it before"**
> WESTWOOD TAKES A BIG STEP FORWARD

"I think Virgin gave us a great deal of freedom and, of course, the funding we needed to grow and push the envelope," agrees Louis. "I don't regret selling to Virgin, but it might have been nice to have shipped *C&C* first!"



Conquering heroes

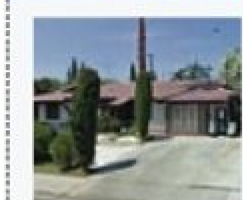
"Before *Dune II* was finished, I already knew what needed to be improved on ▶



» [PC] *Mars Saga* used a simulated 3D view similar to the one seen later in *Eye Of The Beholder*.



GARAGE GANG



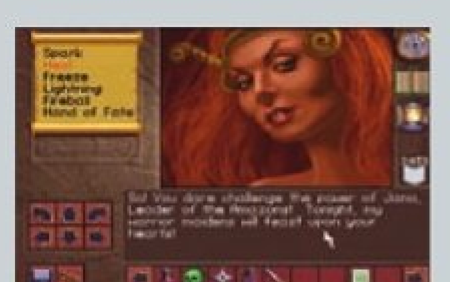
"We actually did start in my parents' converted garage, but we didn't stay there too long," says Louis. "We had to hire a third person, Barry Green, to take on two games at once on all new platforms. That propelled us to become a real company. Within the first year Bob Lindsey of Epyx was going to visit us at CES in January so we were in a panic. We simply could not walk him by the trash cans and through the garage door. We rented a starter suite in a place called the Atrium. We had a receptionist and a conference room, so no one needed to know we only had 400 square feet in a small office down the hall."

FROM THE ARCHIVES

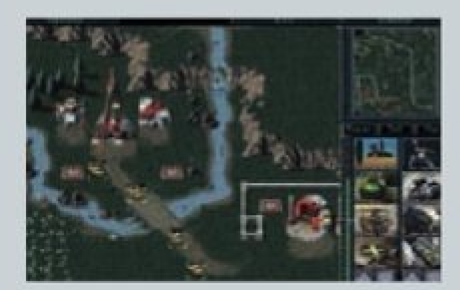


» [PC] *Eye of the Beholder 2* was a superb follow-up to the first PC hit.

SIX OF THE BEST



Dune II: Battle For Arrakis [1992]
Along with *Eye Of The Beholder*, this breakthrough real-time strategy game was responsible for catapulting Westwood firmly into the limelight. It's still a gripping and playable title.



The Legend Of Kyrandia Book Two: Hand Of Fate [1993]
An offbeat, humorous fantasy adventure – file alongside *King's Quest* and *Simon The Sorcerer* – *Hand Of Fate* is the best of Westwood's adventure trilogy.



Lands Of Lore: The Throne Of Chaos [1993]
With *Lands Of Lore*, Westwood created the ultimate expression of the RPG/ real-time blend pioneered in *Eye Of The Beholder*, and this first instalment remains the most fully realised of the series.



Command & Conquer [1995]
The title that changed the face of strategy gaming. The controls are intuitive, allowing multiple-unit selection, and the leap from *Dune*'s simplistic visuals to the realistic fields of *C&C* is impressive. Generous multiplayer options round off the package.



Blade Runner [1997]
Side-stepping the plot and Deckard character from the movie, Westwood's adaptation was promoted as "the first real-time 3D adventure game". The game's lavish visuals and attention to detail have attracted a deserved cult following.

Command & Conquer: Red Alert 2 [2000]
The B-movie craziness of *Red Alert* returned in this sequel, the last 2D RTS released by Westwood. With the Soviets invading the USA, it's up to you to either put a stop to their plans, or join in.

ONE TO AVOID

Command & Conquer: Renegade [2002]
The idea of setting an FPS in the *C&C* universe is intriguing, and it's not a bad game; it's just that *Renegade* doesn't really add much to the crowded genre. The multiplayer mode is actually far more interesting than the campaign.



in the next game," says Brett. "I didn't want to create *Dune III*. I had an idea for the *C&C* mythos and I collaborated with Joe Bostic, who handled all the programming." The game in question became Westwood's biggest hit to date and fully vindicated Virgin's decision to acquire the company. One of the first products to fully embrace the PC CD-ROM format, *Command & Conquer* took the real-time unit management of *Dune II*, added an entertaining – if frankly ludicrous – FMV-driven plot, and went on to shift over one and a half million units.

An equally outrageous concept, a time-travelling Albert Einstein assassinating Hitler before his rise and sparking an alternative Second World War, spawned the *C&C* follow-up, *Red Alert*. "It was really clear from the outset that *Red Alert* would have a strong identity," comments Brett. "In my mind, there were three different story arcs to *C&C*: one that was contemporary, one that was an alternate history, and one that was in the future. All three products could have been developed simultaneously, and they would have all remained a *Command & Conquer* game because, at their core, they all had a certain standard of design. We always built on what we knew and added features people wanted, but with *C&C*, we were adding things that players didn't even know they needed."

The *Command & Conquer* and *Red Alert* franchises went on to become Westwood's biggest money-spinners, clocking in over a dozen titles including sequels and add-ons. "Every *Command & Conquer* game was designed to stand alone," says Brett. "Even though *Tiberian Sun* was positioned as a sequel to *C&C*, both were completely independent games. You didn't have to know anything about any other *C&C* game to be able to jump in and understand what was going on."



Westwood also showed a strong commitment to multiplayer gaming with the *C&C* series, the games coming on two discs to allow competitive play via a network straight from the box. Another Westwood-developed title, the 1995 PC CD-ROM version of *Monopoly*, was the first commercial game to feature internet play and an online 'chat' system. "Online gaming was very important to the company," says Brett. "We felt the only thing better than playing against the computer was playing against your brother or your best friend. When high-speed internet came online we finally had the ability to share the gaming experience, whether it was to collaborate with someone or to compete against them."

In addition to *C&C*, the Virgin era was a prolific time for Westwood, with the release of two *Kyrandia* sequels, an update of *Dune II* called *Dune 2000*, and Disney collaboration *The Lion King*. Another defining franchise was a re-imagining of *Eye Of The Beholder* for the CD-ROM age: the *Lands Of Lore* series. Brett, however, has reservations about how the games progressed after the excellent original. "I loved the first *Lands Of Lore*, a product I directed," he says. "But the second and third games, to be blunt, were a letdown for me, and I have to take some responsibility for that. I had a vision for the games, but I couldn't spend enough time with the team to communicate it. At the time, I wanted to focus on developing the second and third story arcs for *C&C*."

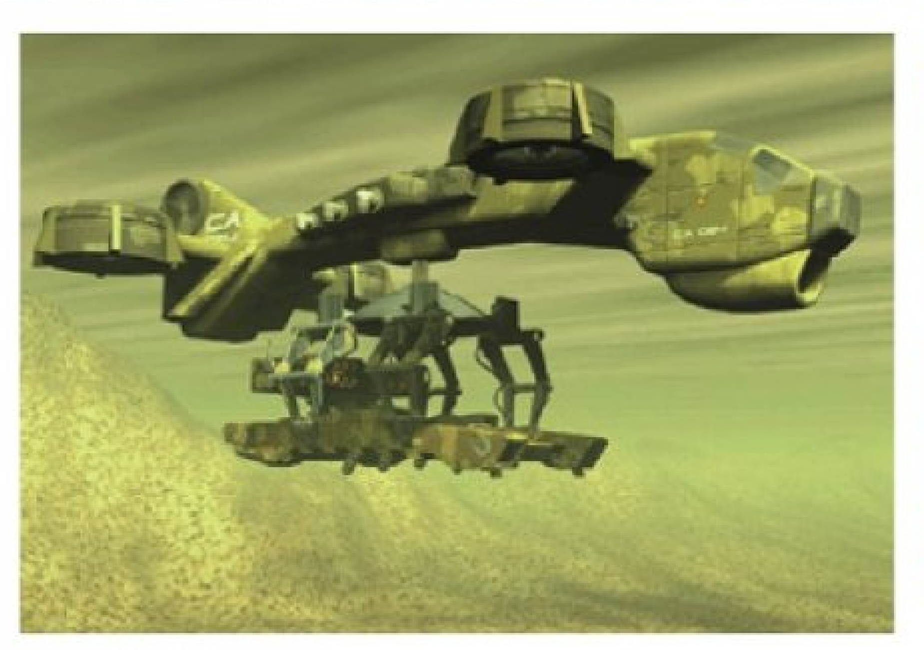
Blade Runner to Earth & Beyond

The inclusion of Patrick Stewart's dulcet tones in *Lands Of Lore* was one of many collaborations between well-known actors

» [PC] *Kyrandia Book 3: Malcolm's Revenge*. It's all gone a bit *Monkey Island*.









» [Amiga] The wildebeest stampede stage from *The Lion King*.

and Westwood over the years, along with the likes of Michael Biehn (*The Terminator*, *Aliens*), Sean Young (*Blade Runner*), John Rhys-Davies (*Indiana Jones*, *Lord Of The Rings*) and James Earl Jones (*Star Wars*, *Conan The Barbarian*). "Joe Kucan, known to most as Kane, had connections with the local talent agencies and it was specifically because we were a fledgling industry that we were able to land such great talent," says Louis. "For many actors this was an easy pick-up job that paid well for the small amount of work it required."

For many, Westwood's masterpiece of the Virgin era is its 1997 adaptation of *Blade Runner*. "It's still my favourite film and the game concept, art direction and technical execution were all under my direct control," says Louis. "I loved that we were something different and that the game still holds up visually today. We were using techniques like real-time composition that had not entered into the game culture back in 1996, before there were even decent 3D cards. I'm very pleased that people remember the game not only for the incredible attention to visual detail and dedication to the franchise. Mike Legg and Mike Grayford outdid themselves on the execution, and Aaron Powell, Tse Cheng Lo and myriad talented artists contributed amazing work."

In 1998, Electronic Arts acquired Westwood, ending the prosperous relationship with Virgin. Despite hits such as *Red Alert 2*, commercial disappointments like *C&C: Renegade* and MMORPG *Earth & Beyond* contributed to Westwood's closure and absorption into EA Los Angeles in 2003. "If anything led to Westwood missing a beat, it was perhaps a result of the conflicting cultures between EA and Westwood," confides Brett, "which became more pronounced as the years went on. In addition, we had a group of creative people who had tasted so much success that it played a role. Finally, I take responsibility for part of it. I was pulled in many different directions and I wasn't saying no to enough things."

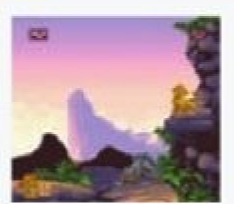
The duo, however, remain rightly proud of their achievements and the legacy of the Westwood years, which left us with so many truly memorable games. "Many things are near and dear to my heart," says Brett. "I really think we did something fantastic with the *Eye Of The Beholder* series. The *C&C* line I can still play, especially *Red Alert 2*. I also think we did amazing things with *Blade Runner*."

"I'm personally very proud of *Blade Runner*, *DragonStrike*, *The Lion King* and *Monopoly*, all for very different reasons," says Louis. "I still look back and also look forward to those great moments of creative collaboration, when almost everything just seems to work."

"I think Westwood delivered products that were about entertainment, not about forcing you to buy the latest and greatest graphics card," says Brett. "We were about great entertainment, great replay value, compelling characters and story, and loads of depth. I think Westwood earned its page in the history books, not just because we created the real-time strategy genre, but because we brought a lot of innovations to games across the board and had a great product line to back it up."

Asked what he thinks the future holds for the genre that Westwood refined and perfected over the course of nearly 20 years at the top of its game, Brett counters with a query of his own: "What is a strategy game, really? Even in the Westwood days, the genres were blurring. Today, a really good game pulls from everywhere. Games are simple now but deceptively more sophisticated. Easy to get into, easy to play, low memory consumption, low cost, but also offering a lot of gameplay with an entertaining and satisfying experience. But for a 'strategy' game that involves clicking and dragging… we're just not there any more."

THE LION KING



"This was an effort of heroic proportions and one that I will always remember as a great accomplishment," says Louis. "We built the game from scratch for two platforms – the SNES and Genesis – in less than six months, with only 13 people and less than ideal asset flow from Disney. David Perry and the Shiny team had left Virgin just as we started work, and we decided that re-creating all the technology was necessary since we could not access the original authors of the Shiny game engine used for *Aladdin*. The movie was still under production so we could only get details and art assets when sections were approved, which meant months later than our start date and left us about two months to create and integrate all the final assets. We hired the Disney animation team to create the game animations on paper and videotape, but then we had to scan the individual frames and re-create them pixel by pixel. Disney contributed some great artistic work from six of their animators and ink and paint teams. They pushed us and kept the standards high despite a crazy workload. It was a massive collaboration."



» Michael Biehn in *C&C* sequel *Tiberian Sun*.



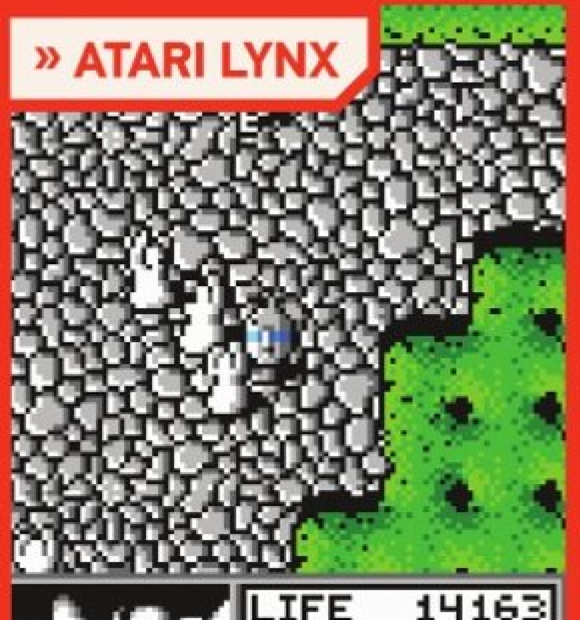
Minority Report

This month's Minority Report has Darran returning to Amstrad's CPC 464, discovering an impressive Super Metroid clone on the SNES, running down endless corridors on both the Atari Lynx and MSX, and sniggering like a schoolboy thanks to the PC Engine

GAUNTLET: THE THIRD ENCOUNTER

■ SYSTEM: ATARI LYNX ■ DEVELOPER: EPYX ■ YEAR: 1990

» ATARI LYNX







» [Lynx] The only real benefit from the small 3D screen is that it will occasionally point out harder to see objects like keys.

■ ***Gauntlet: The Third Encounter* is unusual for a number of reasons, and not just because it's the first *Gauntlet* game not to feature all of the original four protagonists.**

Despite featuring prominently on the original box art – which, incidentally, was the same art used for the Mega Drive's take on *Gauntlet* – the Warrior and Elf are nowhere to be seen. Instead, the Valkyrie and Wizard are joined by a motley crew of characters that range from a punk rocker to a nerd who looks suspiciously like Chip from *Chip's Challenge*, another Atari Lynx game.

All the characters have their own stats and also have their unique weapons, such as books for the nerd and a parrot for the pirate. All in all there are eight different warriors to choose from, but we'll often pick the overpowered Android, as it's not only massively stronger than the other characters but also looks a bit like 7-Zark-7 from *Battle Of The Planets*.

The new range of characters isn't the only difference, as the gameplay has changed in a number of ways, and – to some gamers, at least – not necessarily for the better. Monster generators no longer feature in the game, so it's relatively easy to clear stages, as there's no chance of enemies reappearing. There's a new RPG-lite system included as well, which allows you to save and manipulate the various potions and food you pick up. Unlike the original *Gauntlet* games, you can actually save items and use them as and when they're needed. This in itself is rather useful, as there are a number of scrolls featuring handy abilities like invisibility

» AMSTRAD CPC

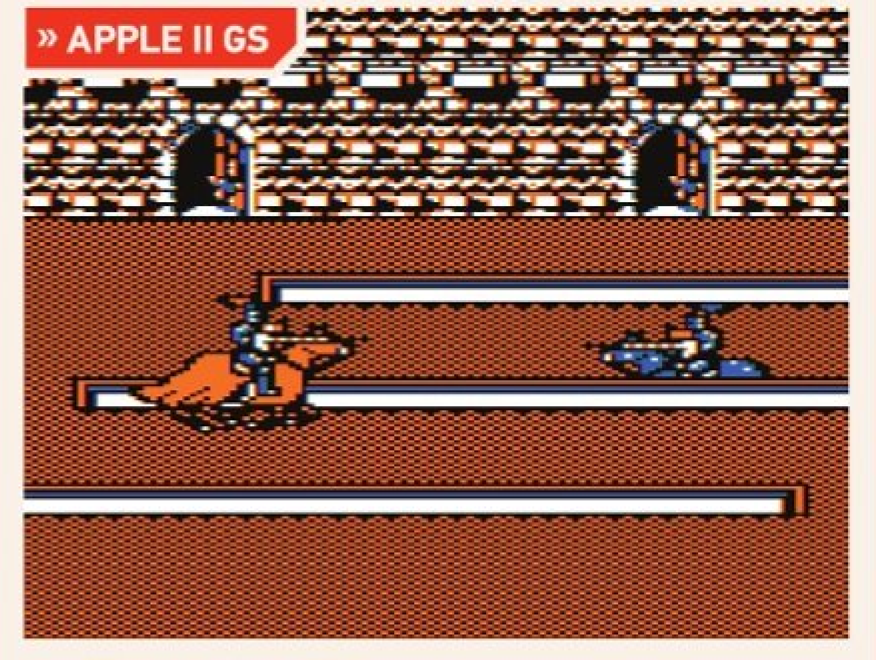


» XYPHOES FANTASY

■ SYSTEM: AMSTRAD CPC
■ DEVELOPER: SILMARILS ■ YEAR: 1991

■ **Sometimes a game** comes along and you wonder just how the developer managed to pull it off. *Xyphoes Fantasy* is one such game. Created by Silmarils, which cut its teeth in the French demo scene, it's a truly stunning-looking game that features some of the best visuals and smoothest scrolling that you're ever likely to see on the CPC. While it's a *Shadow Of The Beast* clone at heart, the huge levels, which load in large, *Savage*-style chunks; varied gameplay; and those glorious visuals will certainly keep your attention. The only real downside is actually getting hold of a copy.

» APPLE II GS



» CHIVALRY

■ SYSTEM: APPLE II GS
■ DEVELOPER: OPTIMUM RESOURCE ■ YEAR: 1983

■ **Now this is** a rather interesting little oddity. *Chivalry* is an intriguing blend between an RPG and a conventional board game for up to four players. At the beginning of each turn you'll roll a die or spin a wheel and be moved forward a few spaces. Areas are depicted using locations like a valley inn or a ferry, and you'll have to either take part in a mini-game or instead make a decision that could impact on a later turn. Although it can be a bit slow-paced at times, there is more than enough variety in the included mini-games to ensure that you never get bored. An interesting little game that's worth investigating.

» SNES



» PHANTOM 2040

■ SYSTEM: SNES
■ DEVELOPER: SUNSOFT ■ YEAR: 1995

■ **Ignore the fact** that this game was based on a cartoon show, which itself was based on the popular comic book hero, and instead revel in a superb *Metroid* clone that deserves your full attention.

While the visuals and audio are both of a high standard, it's in the impressive game design where *Phantom 2040* truly shines. It's not quite up to the standard of *Super Metroid* or later *Castlevania* games, but there's enough variety between the platforming and run-and-gunning to hold your interest, while the solid exploration and constant new weapons keep the game fresh and exciting.

» [Lynx] At the end of each game you're shown a nice scaling effect as the camera zooms in on your skeleton.





» [Lynx] Another way you can tell that this isn't really a *Gauntlet* game is the fact that hardly any of the original monsters make an appearance.





» ABOUT THE SYSTEM

- Created by Epyx, the Atari Lynx was originally known as the Handy Game
- It featured a number of cool features including the ability to flip the screen to cater for left and right-handed players, and the ability to play vertically
- Launch games included *California Games* and *Blue Lightning*

that you won't necessarily want to use when you first find them.

Computer terminals can also be found on certain levels. A new introduction to the franchise, they offer handy hints and tips, and allow you to spend the treasure scattered around each level. It's worth noting as well that you can only carry a limited number of items, so a small amount of strategy is needed, especially on later stages, which require a large number of keys to progress.

The reasons for these many changes are because *The Third Encounter* didn't actually start off life as an official *Gauntlet* game. Created by the Lynx's developer Epyx, it was originally known as *Time Quests And Treasure Chests*. It was later adapted to the more well-known *Gauntlet* name in order to increase its appeal.

The end result is an enjoyable enough little game that is let down in a number of key areas. Firstly, the speed of the game is rather sluggish, and it lacks the immediacy that the original arcade *Gauntlet* titles offered. The playing area is also cause for concern; while it's a nice touch that you play the game with your Lynx held vertically, you lose a large portion of the screen due to your inventory and a small 3D view, which looks cool but serves no real purpose. These additions, while nice in their own way, do mean that the playing area is quite cramped, especially when you're playing with three other players.

Although *Gauntlet: The Third Encounter* isn't really a 'proper' *Gauntlet* game, it remains a decent adventure and a solid addition to any Lynx collector's library.



» [Lynx] While there's a nice range of characters, it's a pity that theWarrior and Elf didn't make it into the game.



» COMMODORE 16



» FIRE ANT

■ SYSTEM: COMMODORE 16
■ DEVELOPER: MOGUL COMMUNICATIONS ■ YEAR: 1984

■ ***Fire Ant* was** released on a number of different systems, but we have a special affinity for the C16 version. Taking on the role of the titular ant, you're required to simply rescue your queen from the evil scorpions that have invaded your colony. It's a surprisingly clever game as well, as you can trick enemies into eating each other, flood pits and even plant explosives. The single-screen mazes often require a fair amount of lateral thinking to work out and there can be some frustrating deaths due to dodgy collision detection, but the core gameplay keeps pulling you back for one more go.

» MSX



» THE WRECK

■ SYSTEM: MSX
■ DEVELOPER: ELECTRIC SOFTWARE ■ YEAR: 1984

■ **Fans of** *3D Monster Maze* and *Sultan's Maze* may well want to take a look at this intriguing MSX title, as it features a very similar premise. Taking control of a diver, you must explore a large ship, which looks suspiciously like a giant maze. The wreck itself is full of jellyfish and other annoying creatures, which will send you back to the start if you come into contact with them. Fortunately you're armed with a handy harpoon that can destroy most of the critters you encounter, so all you need to do now is fully explore the giant ship before your precious oxygen supply runs out. Easy, right?

» PC ENGINE



» STRIP FIGHTER II

■ SYSTEM: PC ENGINE
■ DEVELOPER: GAMES EXPRESS ■ RELEASED: 1993

■ **We could have** used the following words to introduce you to a hidden gem that's worthy of your time. Instead, we're going to use them to warn you away from one of the crappiest, laziest fighters we've ever had the misfortune to play.

Consisting of six instantly forgettable female fighters in various states of undress, it's a complete mess of a game thanks to rubbish controls, questionable collision detection and some naff special moves. People who are easily titillated might glean something from the half-nude ladies, but anyone else is just going to discover an incredibly bland fighter.

The mid-Nineties were an interesting time in gaming. Technology was rapidly advancing and the community was ready for something new. Even so, it's hard to believe anyone expected something as fresh and innovative as Crash Bandicoot. Cole Machin talks to Andrew Gavin about Sony's surprise mascot



CRASH BANDICOOT®

As gamers, we typically like to think of the average blockbuster release as being something that was planned in infinitesimal detail. We tend to conjure up images in our mind of a big corporate boardroom, filled with serious-looking fellows in suits and armed with sales reports and market research. We envision flow charts, slides and whatever else we used before PowerPoint. Sometimes it's hard to remember that some of the greatest games ever developed came about organically, that they started off as nothing more than a great idea between two friends, and that sometimes the story of how the game came to be is almost as interesting as the game itself.

To really understand the story of *Crash Bandicoot*, we first need to discuss a little bit of the history behind those who created it – Andrew Gavin and Jason Rubin, who have been long time business partners. Having founded the company that would later become Naughty Dog while still in high school (at the tender age of 16, no less), by 1994 the two had a long and accomplished resume that included games such as *Keef The Thief* and *Rings Of Power*. It was not until college, however, that the two students would invest their own money in what would become the game most responsible for truly launching their careers, *Way Of The Warrior*, a fighting game for the 3DO platform. It was the game that first drew the attention of a little publishing company known as Universal Interactive Studios.

After the release of *Way Of The Warrior*, Naughty Dog was signed to a three-game contract with U.I.S. and given office space on Universal's lot. With this deal in place, Naughty Dog was a company on the move, literally. The company shifted its headquarters from Boston to Los Angeles. While such a road trip usually provides friends with plenty of reasons to become rather annoyed with one another, Gavin and Rubin managed to be a great deal more productive.

"Jason and I had been debating our next game for months, but the three-day drive from Boston to LA provided ample opportunity. Having studied arcade games intensely – in 1994 they were still relevant – we couldn't help but notice that two or three of the leading genres had really begun making the transition into full 3D rendering. Racing had, with *Ridge Racer* and *Virtua Racing*;



IN THE KNOW

- » **PUBLISHER:** SONY
- » **DEVELOPER:** NAUGHTY DOG
- » **RELEASED:** 1996
- » **PLATFORMS:** PLAYSTATION
- » **GENRE:** PLATFORMER



» [PSone] The Whole Hog level stands out as a fan favourite.



» [PSone] *Crash*'s engine only allowed 800 polygons to be visible onscreen at any one time.



» [PSone] One interesting aspect of *Crash Bandicoot* was the mixture of conventional platforming and 3D adventure.



» [PSone] *Crash Bandicoot*'s zany characters are often cited as one of the franchise's greatest strengths.

NEW DOG, NEW TRICKS

IF NAUGHTY DOG'S original intent was to create a new and iconic gaming mascot, it would seem that there can be little doubt about its success. Since the original game's release in 1996, Crash has gone on to star in an additional 17 titles available on over half a dozen various platforms. Perhaps even more importantly, the character has moved beyond the constraints of his original platforming genre and stepped up to compete with the big boys in nearly every genre in which Sonic The Hedgehog or Mario have found success. Over the years, Crash has risen to the challenges presented by and competed with such gaming power houses as *Mario Kart 64* and the *Mario Party* series. The greatest example of the strength of the original concept and character design, however, shows in the character's continued popularity despite difficulties encountered as control of the *Crash Bandicoot* IP changed hands, going from Naughty Dog to Traveller's Tales to Radical Entertainment.



fighting, with *Virtua Fighter*, and gun games, with *Virtua Cop*. Racing was clearly 100 per cent better in 3D, and while *Virtua Fighter* wasn't as playable as *Street Fighter*, the writing was on the wall. Sensing opportunity, we turned to our own favourite genre, the character platform action game (CAG for short)."

It was not until the second day of the drive, however, that inspiration would come from a rather unusual and unpleasant source.

"Passing Chicago and traveling through America's long flat heartland, fed on McDonalds, and accompanied by a gassy Labrador/Ridgeback mix (also fed on McDonalds), the idea came to us. We called it the 'Sonic's Ass' game. And it was born from the question: what would a 3D CAG be like? 'Well,' we thought, 'you'd spend a lot of time looking at Sonic's ass.' Aside from the difficulties of identifying with a character only viewed in posterior, it seemed cool."

By the time the duo had arrived in Los Angeles, the idea had begun to firm up. As such, they presented it to Universal Vice President Mark Cerny and Naughty Dog's newest (and first) employee, Dave Baggett. All agreed that the concept behind Sonic's Ass was brilliant and, at the time, unique. To the team's knowledge, no other developer had begun any sort of work trying to bring this well-loved genre into the world of three-dimensional gaming. The question that faced the now-four-man team was clear: what system would best meet their needs?

"The 3DO was DOA, but we also got our hands on specs for the upcoming Sega Saturn, the Sega 32X, and the mysterious Sony PlayStation. The decision really didn't take very long. 3DO: poor 3D power, and no sales. 32X: unholy Frankenstein's monster – and no sales. Saturn: also a crazy hybrid design, and really clunky dev units. Then there was Sony. Its track record in videogames was nil, but it was a sexy company and a sexy machine – by far the best of the lot. I won't even bring up the Jaguar."

> "Sony's track record in videogames was nil, but it was a sexy company and a sexy machine"

Beyond the technical elements, however, there was perhaps an even more important factor involved in the decision. If the team's plans were to create a new character-driven platformer, the console manufacturer's previous successes in this field of gaming needed to be considered. If the team developed for Sega, then its new character would always play second fiddle to the well-established and wildly popular Sonic the Hedgehog. Similarly, Nintendo seemed to already have some sort of rotund plumber gamers were fond of. Sony, on the other hand, didn't even have a mascot – a void that Naughty Dog might just manage to fill. From this, Willie the Wombat was born.

If Naughty Dog was going to create the next *Sonic* or *Mario*, the next challenge would lay in making the main character fun and lovable and, of course, in creating a villain that could remain fresh and fun throughout an entire franchise.

"I remember it clearly. The four of us were eating at this mediocre Italian near Universal and I had this idea of an evil genius villain with a big head. Obviously, brainy cartoon villains have big heads. He was all about his attitude and his minions. Videogames need lots of minions. We imagined The Brain from *Pinky And The Brain* combined with minions like the weasels in *Who Framed Roger Rabbit*; a villain, all full of himself, unable to conceive of ever



DEVELOPER HIGHLIGHTS

CRASH TEAM RACING
SYSTEM: PLAYSTATION
YEAR: 1999

JAK & DAXTER: THE PRECURSOR LEGACY
SYSTEM: PS2
YEAR: 2001

UNCHARTED 2: AMONG THIEVES (PICTURED)
SYSTEM: PS3
YEAR: 2009

doing anything the simple way, but constantly (in his eyes) betrayed by the incompetence of his henchmen.

"I put on my silly villain voice and intoned, 'If you had three neurons between you, you couldn't make a triangle!' With this attitude, his name, Doctor Neo Cortex, popped instantly into our heads."

Charles Zembillas and Joe Pearson were then tasked with designing the look of the decidedly cartoony cast of characters, creating the fantastic look and feel that the *Crash Bandicoot* series would later become known for. The most fantastic designs in the world, however, are nothing if the game's designers are unable to squeeze the same look and feel out of the gaming hardware with which they are to be presented, and this proved problematic for the fledgling Naughty Dog team.

"Dave struggled to build an engine and tool pipeline that would make it possible to render these grandiose cartoon worlds we had envisioned on paper. We made a bunch of really innovative choices that influenced our direction.

"The PlayStation had this oddball 512x240 video mode that almost no-one ever used, mostly because it ate up too much video memory and didn't give you enough room for textures. But at the same time we found the machine was really good at rendering shaded, but un-textured, triangles. In fact, it did this just as fast in the 512 mode as in the typical 320 mode. Since polygons on small 3D characters didn't end up very big anyway, it turned out that shaded characters actually looked better than textured ones.

"I also concocted a crazy algorithmic texture packer that would deal with the fact that our gorgeous 512x240 mode left us with too little texture memory, and the even crazier – way crazier – virtual memory system required to shoehorn the 8-16MB levels the artists created into the PlayStation's little 2MB of RAM. Dave, meanwhile, had to invent insane bidirectional 10x compressors to help get the 128 MB levels down into 12 MB, and figure out some tool for managing the construction of our gigantic 3D worlds."



Developing the overall gameplay of such an innovative title also presented some challenges. When *Crash Bandicoot* first began development, nothing like it had been done before. There was no pre-existing three dimensional variation on platforming titles to dissect in terms of what worked and what did not. Even something as seemingly basic as the control structure required multiple reworkings.

"I did all of the programming on it, but Mark helped a lot with the complaining. For example, 'He doesn't stop fast enough,' or 'He needs to be able to jump for a frame or two *after* he's run off a cliff or it



» [PSone] According to folklore, if the head of Universal Interactive Entertainment had had his way, Crash would have been called 'Wizzy the Wombat' or 'Ozzie the Ottsel'.

MASCOT MARKETING

AROUND THE TIME of *Crash Bandicoot*'s release, it was almost impossible not to think of Crash whenever anyone mentioned the Sony PlayStation. Though he may not have been the system's official mascot, advertising campaigns for the game seemed spun to ensure that any viewer would associate the game with Sony's entrance into the console market. This was more noticable in some advertisements than others. For example, one commercial featured Crash Bandicoot arriving at Nintendo headquarters to taunt Mario by way of loudspeaker. Furthermore, the only scene showing gameplay footage of *Crash Bandicoot* devoted nearly as much screen space to the PlayStation controller as it did to the game itself. Similarly, an early Australian advertisement for the game, which featured a gentleman acting as though he were Crash while in a convenience store, displayed the official PlayStation logo on the bottom-left-hand side of the screen throughout its entire 30-second duration, before ending with the now-famous slogan 'Do Not Underestimate The Power of The PlayStation'.




» [PSone] The cartoony, brightly coloured tribal feel contributed a lot to the visual appeal of the early series.

will be frustrating.' Jason's also really good at the detection of flaws."

Every aspect of the game would need to go through this sort of process; even some of the game's most notable elements came about as an elegant solution to difficulties encountered through the change into 3D gaming. The crates, perhaps one of *Crash Bandicoot*'s defining features, were conceived as a way to compensate for the PlayStation's inability to display more than between two and four incredibly high poly count enemies.

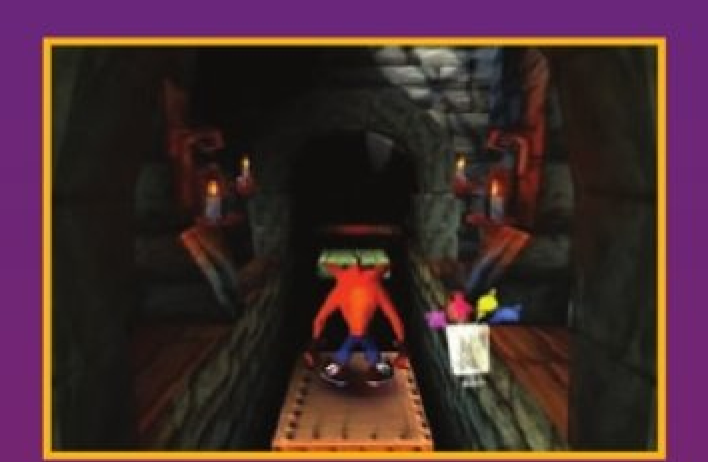
As the game shaped up, the team realised that it would require a publisher. At this point, its contract with Sony was for development only, with the assumption being that Naughty Dog would need to, at some point, find a third-party publisher if the game were ever to see the light of day. This was a slight problem, as Naughty Dog's bid to create a new mascot for Sony would greatly benefit from additional involvement from the company. Thankfully, Gavin had a brilliant back-door solution to this minor problem.

"Around Thanksgiving 1995, I and one of our artists, Taylor Kurosaki, who had a TV editing background, took footage from the game and spent two days editing it into a two-minute 'preview tape'. We deliberately leaked this to a friend at Sony so that the brass would see it.

"They liked what they saw. Management shakeups at Sony slowed the process, but by March of 1996 Sony and Universal had struck a deal for Sony to do the publishing. While Sony never officially declared us their mascot, in all practical senses we became one."

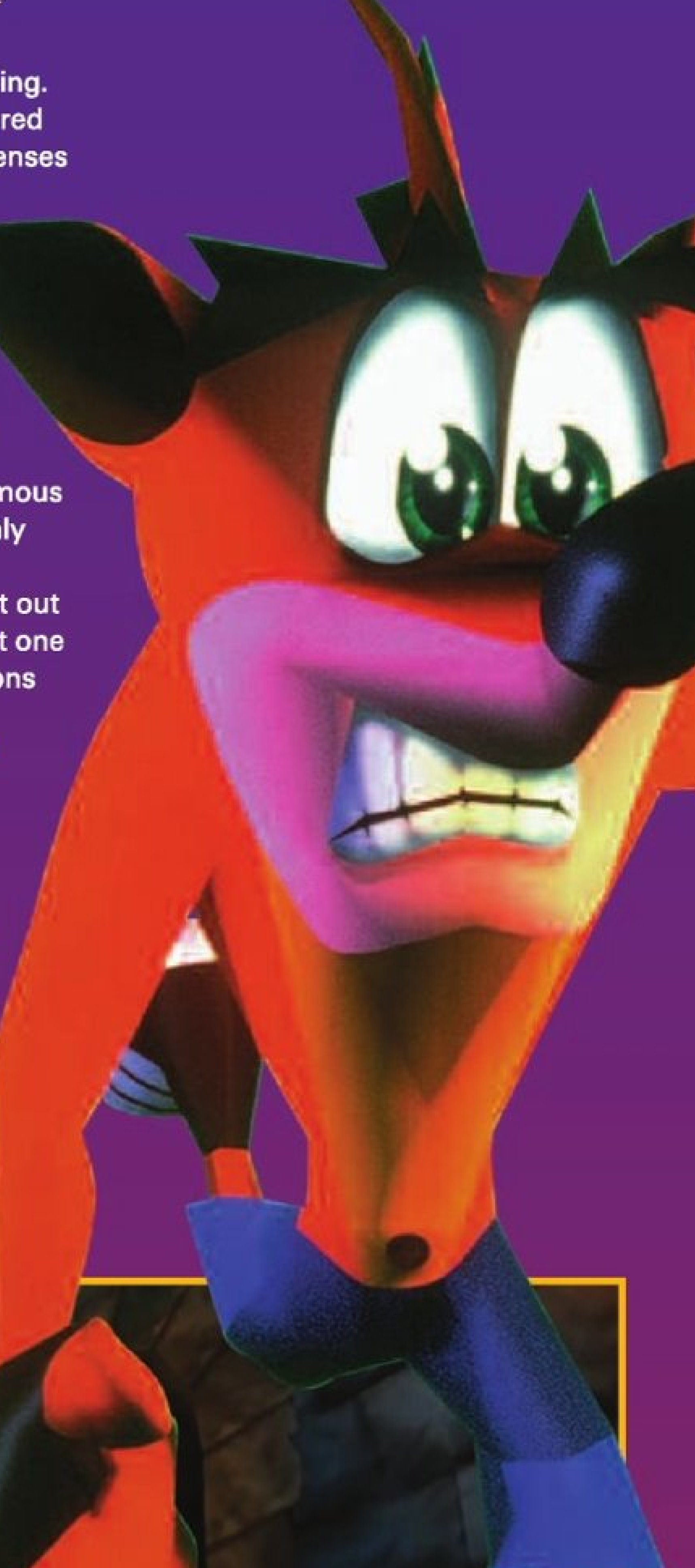
Needless to say, when the finished game was released the response was huge. Not only did gamers flock to this new genre of gaming in droves, but the name Crash Bandicoot would go on to become synonymous with PlayStation in a way that only Lara Croft could compete with. Indeed, Sony may never have set out looking for a mascot but they got one nonetheless; a mascot that millions worldwide would come to love. Naughty Dog had accomplished something that no third-party developer had done before or since; it had created an iconic character that would stand shoulder to shoulder with *Sonic* and *Mario*. 40 million copies later – across various games – and Crash Bandicoot is still going strong today. We wonder if Willy the Wombat would have had the same eventual success…

» [PSone] The majority of the game's bosses provided not only a challenge but also comic relief.





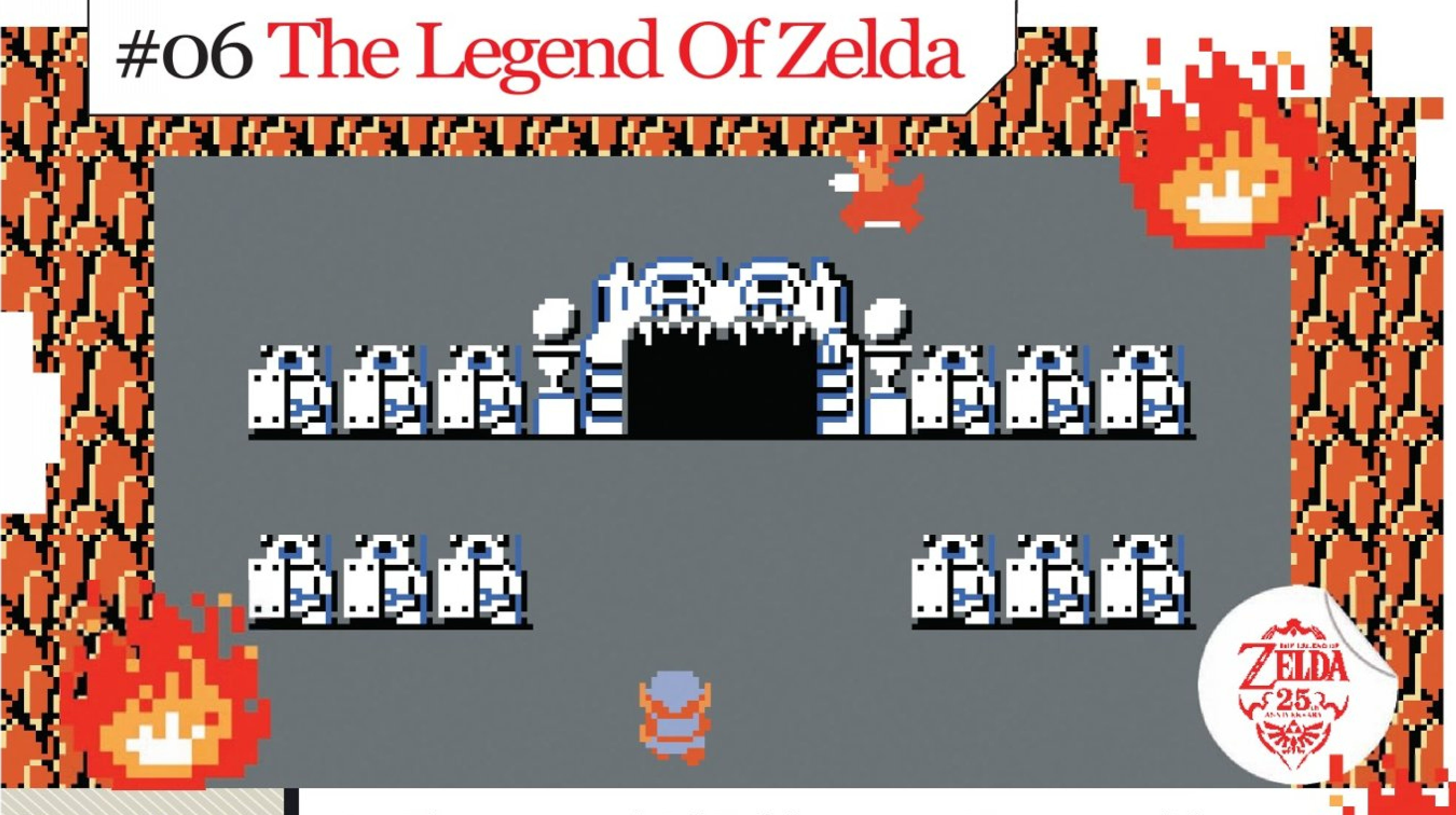
» [PSone] *Crash*'s crates began life as a way of adding level content in the lieu of enough memory to fill the screen with baddies.





THE ULTIMATE GUIDE TO...

#06 The Legend Of Zelda



Instant Expert

The Legend Of Zelda is the most non-linear adventure in the series. You can tackle the dungeons in almost any order you like, and the game can be finished without ever collecting the sword.

The Legend Of Zelda was the first NES title to sell over a million copies and went on to sell 6.5 million in total.

Though the map for *Zelda*'s third dungeon resembles a Nazi swastika, it is actually the much more innocuous manji, an ancient religious symbol used by Japanese Buddhists, which is the reverse of the infamous emblem and is common in Eastern philosophy.

Link is an unusual hero in that, in the first game and canonically throughout the series, he is left-handed. Perhaps by coincidence, the word 'links' is German for 'left'.

Complete *The Legend Of Zelda* and you can play a second quest with different dungeon layouts and item placements. If you want to skip straight to it, enter your name as 'ZELDA' at the start.

Princess Zelda is named after Zelda Fitzgerald, wife of novelist Francis Scott Fitzgerald.

When *Zelda* arrived in the US and Europe it was ported from disk to cartridge and became the first console game to include a battery to store save data.

As The Legend Of Zelda turns 25 years old, Ashley Day argues that Nintendo's seminal adventure game isn't just an important piece of history but a game that's still great to play today



You really have to hand it to Miyamoto and his band at Nintendo. To make one of the greatest and most important videogames of all time, in the shape of *Super Mario Bros*, was one thing. But to repeat the same trick just a year later, and in a completely different genre, is just incredible.

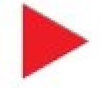
In fact, there isn't even a year between *Super Mario Bros* and *The Legend Of Zelda*. There was only five months between the Japanese release dates of each game, yet the latter represents a giant stride from the former in terms of game design. Where *Mario* was brilliantly simple, placing you at the start of a linear journey and merely asking you to move a little plumber to the right, *Zelda* offered a world of possibility by comparison.

Starting off in the middle of the vast land of Hyrule, it put you in control of a left-handed elf-like boy named Link, with three possible exits standing before him, and then… did nothing. No instructions, no dialogue, no hints. Just the promise of adventure and an invitation into the unknown. Which way should you go? Well that was entirely up to you, and that was the entire point of the game. There was an ultimate goal, of course – to collect the eight scattered pieces of the Triforce of Wisdom in order to defeat the evil Ganon and rescue the eponymous Princess Zelda – but it was the open nature of how you approached this task that really made *The Legend Of Zelda* so compelling.

It's a well-known story that Miyamoto's inspiration for *Zelda* came from his childhood memories of exploring the Japanese countryside without a map and the pleasure that he got from discovering places he had no previous knowledge of. The goal of the *Zelda* project was to capture that childlike fascination with the unknown, the sense of wonder that the world can provoke when everything around you is so new and unusual. And that project also happened to fortuitously coincide with the development of the Famicom Disk System, Nintendo's Famicom add-on that side-stepped the rising cost of ROM chips and allowed developers to create much bigger games than before.

The Disk System's rewritable media also allowed for game progress to be permanently saved without the need for cumbersome passwords, and this was a crucial technological advantage that allowed Nintendo to further distinguish its console games from those of the arcades. Coin-operated arcade games were still the dominant form of videogaming in 1986 and were focused very much on short-term challenge, cyclical and repetitive gameplay, and the thrill of chasing a high score. But Nintendo wanted its games to be something different; something you played over a long period of time, returning to like a good book to enjoy an ever-evolving experience; a journey, rather than the same few seconds over and over again.

This is very much how the modern videogame can be described 25 years



Pixel Perfect

Some of Zelda's familiar characters make their debuts





#06 The Legend Of Zelda

Critical Reception

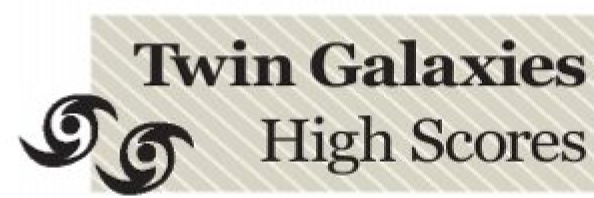
What the gaming press thought…



"The Legend Of Zelda is a massive arcade adventure packed full of dragons, imprisoned princesses, traps and pitfalls"

- COMPUTER & VIDEO GAMES, 1987

Twin Galaxies High Scores



SPEED RUN (QUEST 1)
- **NAME:** RODRIGO LOPES
- **TIME:** 00:31:37

SPEED RUN (QUEST 2)
- **NAME:** RODRIGO LOPES
- **TIME:** 00:39:59

EXTREME CHALLENGE (COMPLETE GAME WITHOUT SWORD, DON'T KILL OVERWORLD ENEMIES)
- **NAME:** MARLON D MORROW
- **COMPLETION:** 100%

on, of course, but *The Legend Of Zelda* was one of the first games to truly offer that kind of deep, long-term experience. And it did it very well indeed. So many early videogames can be credited as the first to do one thing or another, but *Zelda* did it all, establishing the rules of the modern adventure game and in such style that, alongside its sequels, it remains brilliantly playable a quarter of a century later, while Nintendo's competitors are still playing catch-up.

It's not just the tantalising nature of Hyrule's open world that makes *Zelda* so appealing. It's the way Link's ever-increasing inventory and abilities open up new routes through that world, ensuring that it rewards progress with a steady stream of surprises and discoveries right up to the end. There's the contrast between the freedom of the overworld and the tightly focused structure of the dungeons beneath the ground. There's the way each weapon Link acquires has more than one obvious use, forcing you to experiment and be creative with the way you play. And, of course, there's the wealth of secrets that permeate the world, not just rewarding the player but encouraging them to dig deeper, play harder and uncover hidden treasures that make you feel like the best player in the world. It's a deeply personal feature that makes you feel special for finding those secrets and personalises the experience, even though those secrets are, in reality, accessible to everyone.



» [NES] More high explosives can never be a bad thing.

With 25 years under its belt, the *Zelda* series has since gone from strength to strength, and many people have a favourite entry in the series that isn't the first one. *A Link To The Past*, *Link's Awakening*, *Ocarina Of Time* and *Majora's Mask* could all legitimately lay claim to the title of Greatest *Zelda*, but there's something pure about that first game that sets it apart from its successors. Right from *Zelda II* onward, the series began to change. It still retained the core features of an overworld, a series of dungeons and an expanding bag of tricks, but it also lost something along the way. As the series has become increasingly preoccupied with telling a story, you could argue that it has also limited itself, weighing its opening moments down with unnecessary dialogue and lengthy tutorials that actually distance you from Link instead of doing the opposite.

The Legend Of Zelda's real brilliance is that it has the confidence to just drop you into its world and leaves you to explore for yourself, experimenting with its mysteries and discovering secrets without any real hand-holding. Instead of simply telling you a story, it allows you to live the story; its events are driven by your decisions and actions. It feels unique, it rewards those who jump in at the deep end to go see what they can find, and it's a quality that the *Zelda* series would do well to recapture.

Power-ups

Some of The Legend Of Zelda's pick-ups have endured throughout the series' history, while it never quite happened for others…

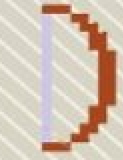


» Bait
This meat is bought from a shop and used to feed any Goriyas that block your path.

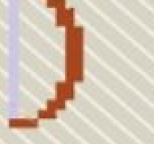


» Bombs
The bomb can be used to hurt just about any enemy but can also be used to open secret entrances.

» Boomerang
The boomerang has two distinct uses. One violent to damage enemies; the other practical, as it can retrieve distant objects.



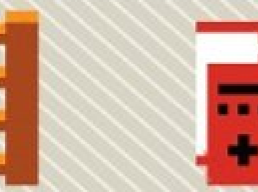
» Bow
The bow is the only thing that can kill Ganon, at least once you've acquired the silver arrows for it.



» Candle
This can be used to light your way, but it can also be used to burn bushes, sometimes revealing secrets.

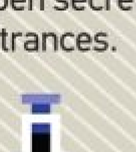


» Ladder
This item allows you to cross small sections of river to take short cuts and is essential for some dungeons.

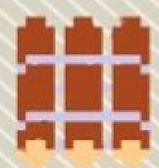


» Magic Book
An optional item that upgrades the wand so that it can shoot fireballs, making candles redundant.

» Magic Wand
It's a wand! What more do we have to tell you? It uses your magic energy to shoot beams.



» Potions
Potions come in two varieties: blue and red. Blue restores some of your life while the red replenishes it all.

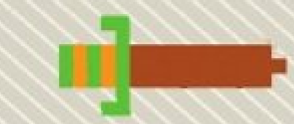


» Raft
Allows Link to get around the waterways of Hyrule. He can embark or disembark the raft at any dock.



» Rings
These, much like every other magic item, can be found in two colours. Each increases Link's strength.

» Shield
The wooden shield just repels ordinary attacks. The magic shield, however, can block fireballs.



» Swords
There are three swords – Wooden, White and Magical – each one more powerful than the last.



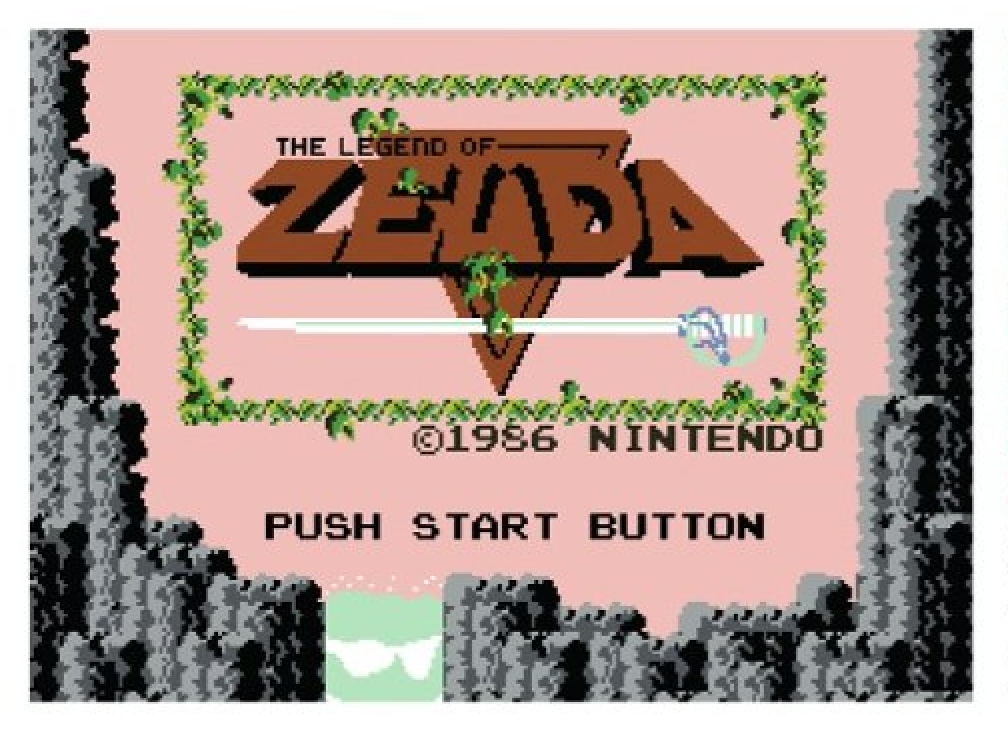
» Whistle
A single-use item that is essential for beating Digdogger, the boss of the fifth dungeon.

Memorable Moments

We present the best bits of the best NES game Nintendo ever made

Signature tune

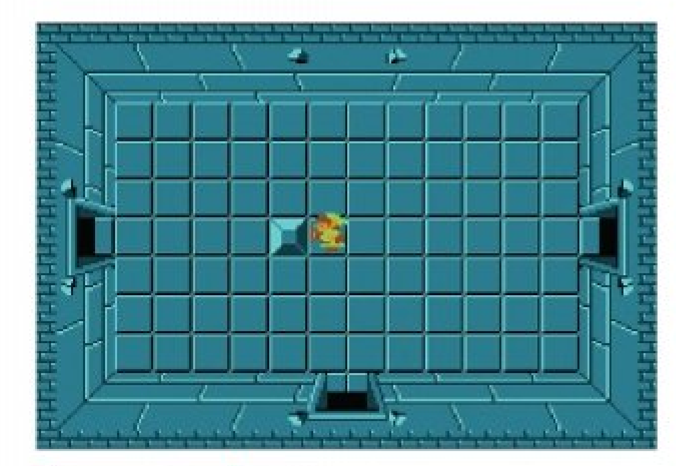
The now-iconic *Zelda* theme slowly plays and builds up speed as a waterfall pours down the title screen. Koji Kondo's composition is yet another classic, leading to his involvement in every game in the series up until *Ocarina Of Time*.





Good advice

One of the few pieces of dialogue is also the most memorable. Though you can play the whole game without the sword, the old man's advice is right. You'll do much better with it, and what's a *Zelda* game without a sword?



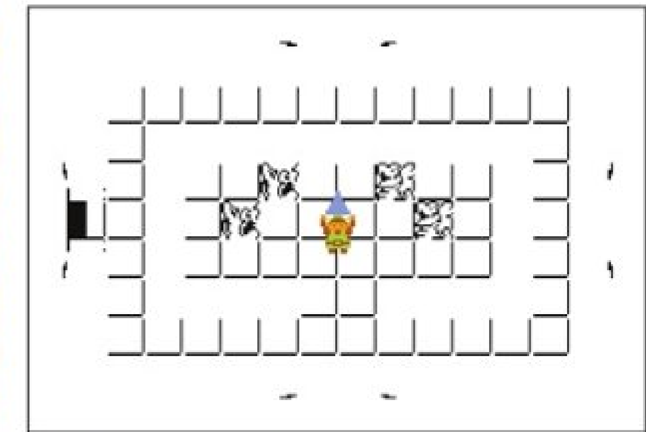
Secret exit

Finding secrets is one of *Zelda*'s greatest pleasures, not to mention one of its inspirations, and here's one of the earliest. A door without a keyhole is opened by pushing a seemingly ordinary block to the left.



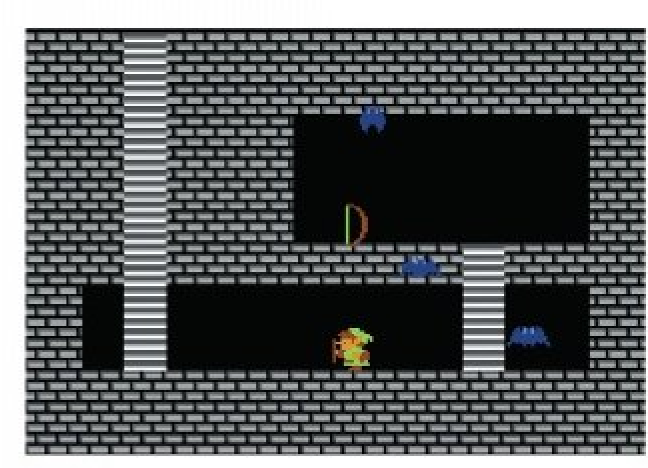
Fairy godmother

Find an enclosed pool and a fairy will pop out and rejuvenate Link's health with a swirl of hearts. It's another feature that has cropped up time and again through the series, with the fairies' abilities and applications expanding.



Triforce get!

Link finds his first piece of the Triforce and holds it above his head in a way that has now become an identifiable characteristic of the little elf boy. The Triforces of Wisdom and Power appear in the original, with Courage debuting in the next.



Side story

Some dungeon screens switch perspective to a side view, a trick that was adopted wholesale for *Zelda II: The Adventure Of Link* and would return for some brief sequences in the Game Boy's *Link's Awakening*.



Hard to swallow

The brilliant Dodongo boss is defeated by getting him to eat and swallow a bomb, causing him some nasty indigestion when it explodes in his belly. A similar boss, King Dodongo, became an iconic sequence in *Ocarina Of Time*.



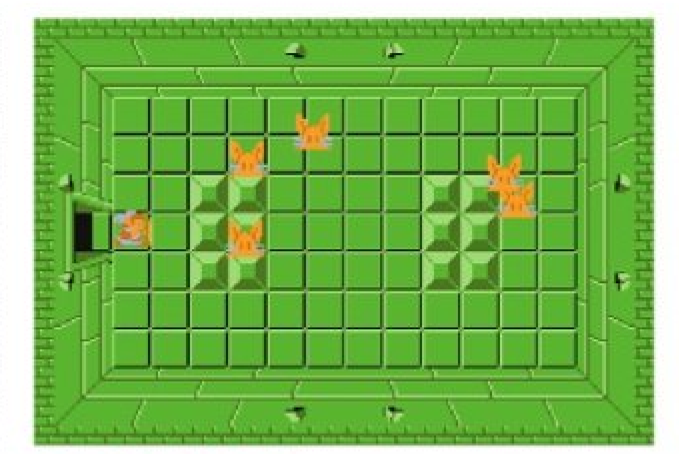
Hidden stairs

Another great secret. Touch a statue and it will come to life to attack you. Some statues stand over stairways that lead to secret underground rooms, tempting players to engage them in combat in the hope of some reward.



Boss hog

The final showdown with Ganon reveals him to be some kind of grotesque demon pig, much more monstrous than the human reinterpretation in *Ocarina Of Time*. Recent games tend to give him a hideous second form.



Loud noises!

In the Japanese release of *Zelda* you can shout into the Famicom microphone to hurt Pols Voice enemies. But you can't in the NES release. So in Japan it's a memorable moment. Over here it's barely even a regular moment.



Feeding time

This Goriya isn't having a moan; it's actually his stomach rumbling. Feed him the meat and he'll let you pass. The first time a *Zelda* enemy defies expectations of simply being sword fodder and not the last.

Zelda's ending is fairly typical for adventure games, until it reveals that there's a whole new quest to play through

The Versions Of Zelda

There have been many more versions of the original Legend Of Zelda than you probably think. Here's every one and the differences between them

BUY SOMETHIN' WILL YA!







130 20



PROTOTYPE (1985, ESTIMATED)

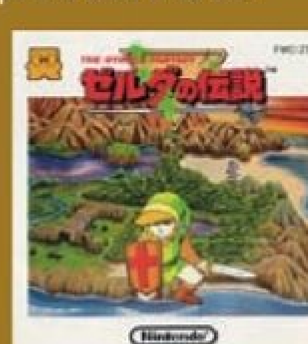
A prototype version of the original Famicom Disk game, only recently discovered in late 2010. The prototype differs from the real thing in several ways, most notably that it's a lot easier thanks to a higher distribution of rupees and slightly different enemy arrangements. The disk image is available to download from **www.lostlevels.org**.





FAMICOM DISK SYSTEM (1986)

The first official release of the game was titled *The Hyrule Fantasy: Zelda No Densetsu* and was a launch title for the Famicom Disk System. This release used the extra capabilities in the FDS to play sounds not present in the NES cartridge version. It also used the microphone built in to the second controller of the Famicom. Blowing into it was a secret way to kill the sound-sensitive Pols Voice enemy, which was technically impossible on the standard NES.





ZELDA NO DENSETSU: TEIKYOU CHARUMERA (1986)

Made to promote Myojo Foods' charumera noodles, this special release of the Famicom Disk System game is identified by a different label design and is considered a rare Famicom collector's item, selling for around £180 in Japanese retro stores.

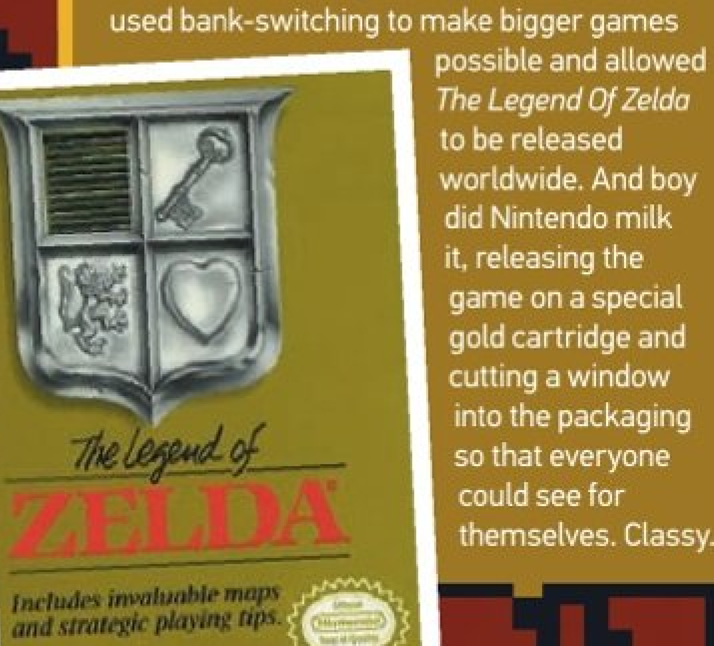






NINTENDO ENTERTAINMENT SYSTEM (1987)

As well as translating the game into English, the US and European release of *The Legend Of Zelda* was the first to arrive on cartridge. Though the Famicom Disk System had been introduced to reduce the cost of ROMs, the add-on never made it outside Japan so Nintendo used a new type of chip. The MMC1 (Memory Management Controller) used bank-switching to make bigger games possible and allowed *The Legend Of Zelda* to be released worldwide. And boy did Nintendo milk it, releasing the game on a special gold cartridge and cutting a window into the packaging so that everyone could see for themselves. Classy.



FAMICOM CARTRIDGE (1994)

Zelda eventually got its Japanese cartridge release in 1994, eight years after the disk release and a staggering eleven years after the launch of the Famicom console. The game is virtually the same except that it's renamed *Zelda No Densetsu 1*, given that the second, third and even fourth *Zelda* games had been released by 1994.



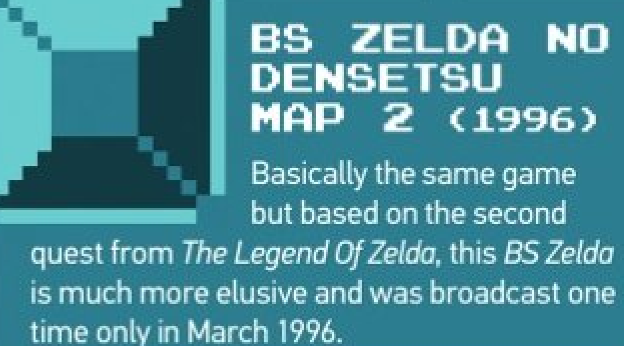
BS ZELDA NO DENSETSU (1995)

A 16-bit remake of the original *Zelda*, broadcast on the Super Famicom's Satellaview add-on between August 1995 and January 1997. As well as the advanced graphics, *BS Zelda No Densetsu* also made use of the hardware's SoundLink feature to provide a live narration throughout the broadcast quest.



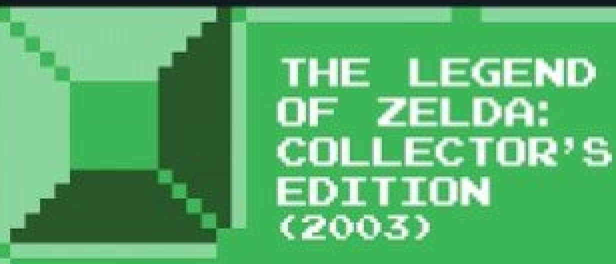
BS ZELDA NO DENSETSU MAP 2 (1996)

Basically the same game but based on the second quest from *The Legend Of Zelda*, this *BS Zelda* is much more elusive and was broadcast one time only in March 1996.

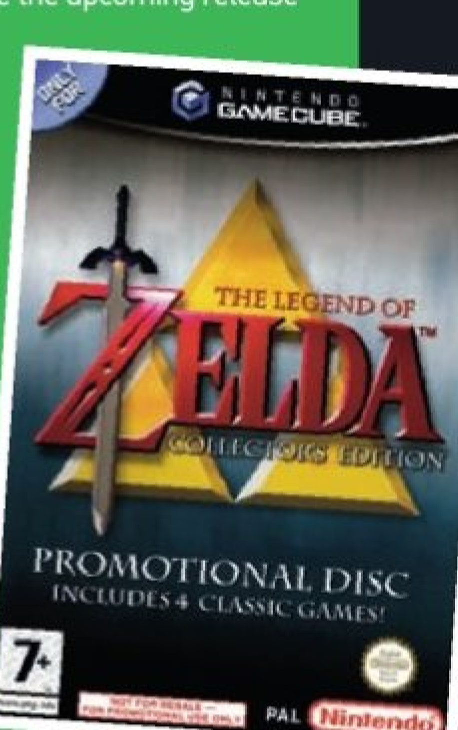




THE LEGEND OF ZELDA: COLLECTOR'S EDITION (2003)



A promotional GameCube disc that was never officially sold but given away to Nintendo customers to promote the upcoming release of *The Wind Waker*. The disc includes emulated versions of *Zelda II*, *Ocarina Of Time*, *Majora's Mask* and, of course, *The Legend Of Zelda*, which featured a new translation that corrected some of the 'Engrish' in the original NES version, as well as changing the name of Gannon to the more canonical Ganon.



VIRTUAL CONSOLE (2006)

The Legend Of Zelda was one of the first big Nintendo games to be distributed on the Wii's Virtual Console service. Sadly, the European version ran in 50Hz as part of Nintendo's ludicrous policy of remaining faithful to the version each territory remembers, despite the fact that it used the updated 2003 translation.



GAME BOY COLOR REMAKE (2000, CANCELLED)

In 1999, Yoshi Okamoto of Capcom negotiated a deal to develop six new *Zelda* titles for the Game Boy Color. Flagship worked on the remake for a year but encountered a number of problems. One was that the GBC's resolution was too different to that of the NES, meaning the game had to be redrawn to fit the more narrow screen, and another was that the team wanted to rebalance the game to make it less difficult. The remake was eventually scrapped in 2000 as Flagship changed direction. At Miyamoto's request, the studio started work on three interlinked games in the 'Triforce' series, named *Mystical Seed Of Wisdom*, *Mystical Seed Of Power* and *Mystical Seed Of Courage*. This idea proved too ambitious, however, and had to be downgraded to the two games that were eventually released: *Oracle Of Ages* and *Oracle Of Seasons*. The latter evolved directly from *Mystical Seed Of Power*, which was developed off the back of the remake project, and you can still find similarities between *Seasons* and *The Legend Of Zelda* today.



THE LEGEND OF ZELDA: MASTERPIECE DEMO (2008)

Nintendo's all-star Wii fighting game *Super Smash Bros Brawl* contains a Vault section that celebrates the history of the playable characters that appear in the game, and the Vault includes a selection of Masterpieces – timed demos of old games so that you can go hands-on with history yourself. With five *Zelda* characters, three of them different versions of Link, appearing in *Brawl*, it's only natural that *The Legend Of Zelda* appears on the disc.



ANIMAL CROSSING (2001)

Both the Nintendo 64 and GameCube editions of *Animal Crossing* allowed players to enjoy a series of NES games in their virtual homes. *The Legend Of Zelda* was one of those games although, weirdly, it was buried in the code and couldn't be accessed without using cheat devices.



NES CLASSICS: THE LEGEND OF ZELDA (2004)

In 2004 Nintendo released a series of Game Boy Advance games called Famicom Minis, which re-created favourite Famicom games on yellow cartridges that came packaged in tiny, cute boxes. When the series came to Europe and America, it was re-envisioned to evoke nostalgia for the NES and sadly lost the cute boxes, but we did get some cool NES games. This version was reformatted for the GBA's wide screen and featured the same new translation as the GameCube remake.



3D CLASSICS EDITION (201X)

When the 3DS was first shown off at E3 2010, one of the tech demos was a series of 'Classic Games' redrawn to take advantage of the 3D display, and one of the games in that showreel was *The Legend Of Zelda*. Nintendo has since confirmed plans to sell downloadable '3D Classics' through the 3DS's eShop service, starting with *3D Excitebike*. *The Legend Of Zelda* hasn't officially been confirmed, but given that *Ocarina Of Time* has been remade for the system, and that Shigeru Miyamoto has expressed interest in giving similar treatment to *A Link To The Past*, it's easy to assume that the original *Zelda* will appear in 3D pretty soon.



R9 GAMER (GBR)







WEIGHTLIFTING

The scene for this event is Russia, home of some of the world's best Olympic lifters. The Soviets have ruled the iron game since 1960, when 360-pound Leonid Zhabotinsky squashed his competition by hoisting 1262 pounds in three lifts.

Weightlifting is more than a test of strength -- it is also a sport of strategy and style. The "snatch" & "clean and jerk" require timing, skill, and determination.







World Games

AROUND THE WORLD IN 80 JOYSTICK WAGGLES

RETROREVIVAL

» C64
» EPYX
» 1986

World Games for the C64 marked a departure from previous entries in the _Games_ series, moving from events you'd see in the summer and winter Olympics to more diverse and, arguably, more interesting fare.

The idea was that you travelled around the world, experiencing eight varied and sometimes decidedly quirky events, many of which had not been immortalised on 8-bit computers before. While a couple were fairly straightforward – weightlifting in Russia and slalom skiing in France – the remainder were extremely leftfield: barrel-jumping on a German lake, perilous cliff-diving in Mexico, log-rolling in Canada, bull-riding in the USA, caber-tossing in Scotland and sumo wrestling in Japan. A varied selection to be sure.

For gamers increasingly jaded by more traditional sports titles, *World Games* provided something genuinely new, even if many of the control methods were tried-and-tested (methodical left/right movements to build speed in barrel-jumping mirrored skating events in *Winter Games*, for example). But what took *World Games* to the next level was its programmers clearly having a blast while making the game, peppering each event with cute graphical touches that you only noticed after extended play.

Some were apparent only if you did nothing – a weightlifter checking his grip, a slalom skier digging his poles into the snow – but many were essentially rewards for failure. Cliff-dive into the bottom of the shallow pool, rather than rapidly surfacing, and a watching bird covers its face with a wing, not daring to look at your diver's misfortune. Likewise, take too long to set down a particularly heavy set of weights and you're treated to a cartoon skit that wouldn't look out of place in a Warner Bros. cartoon.

It's the mark of true gaming genius when a game's as much fun when you fail as when you actually succeed at it. This is one of the reasons the *Games* series – at least if we ignore everything that came after the excellent *California Games* – was such a huge success and remains compelling and fun multiplayer gaming today. *


SEGA

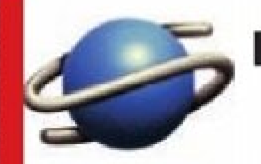


RetroCollect's Adam Buchanan returns with another essential guide to PAL collecting. This month he reveals the ins and outs of collecting for Sega's vastly underrated 32-bit console



» **Manufacturer:** Sega » **Model:** Saturn » **Launched:** 1994 » **Country of Origin:** Japan

SATURN



The Collector's Guide

» There are plenty of great variations of the Saturn available in Japan. It's worth noting, though, that certain games won't work.

» There were quite a few promotional giveaways with *Official Sega Saturn Magazine*. This is one of our favourites.

WHY IT'S COLLECTABLE

With an early lead in the 32-bit power race, the Sega Saturn was expected to build upon the success the Sega Mega Drive had previously created and revolutionise gaming as we knew it. Despite a preemptive lead ahead of its nearest rival, Sega's polygon powerhouse fell rather short of the mark before folding early to Sony's juggernaut, the PlayStation.

Lasting just over three years in Europe and Australia, the Sega Saturn left behind a rich library of unappreciated games and future rarities for collectors, many of which can be still quite hard to find. While many will confidently and rightly argue that the Japanese catalogue is far superior, many of the iconic titles such as *Burning Rangers, NiGHTS Into Dreams* and *Shining Force III* still managed to propel their way into European markets before Sega called it a day.

No matter how you look at it, the PAL release list will always be overshadowed by the success of the Sega Saturn in the East. With just 241 known PAL releases, local collectors have found themselves facing very little competition in sourcing both the rarer and more desirable titles. While this may come as a blessing to some, the reality is that the majority of import purists have plenty of reasons to justify their elitist ways. With over 1,000 Sega Saturn releases available (including variants) in Japan, it should come as no surprise that a large percentage of fans opt to only collect import releases.

Somewhere along the line, Sega decided that moving away from the traditional CD cases would be the perfect move in preparation for the European launch. After what we can assume was a long session at the drawing board, Sega had sculpted quite possibly the worst packaging videogames had seen to date. Determined to create a striking and refined long disc case out of a cardboard-plastic hybrid, it produced a case incapable of holding the medium it was designed for. With countless Sega Saturn discs today scuffed with surface scratches due to the packaging's poor design, the import-otakus triumph yet again while PAL gamers' minds flood with the phrase 'If it ain't broke, don't fix it'.

Sadly, it wasn't just the exceptional software and design ideas which Japan failed to export. The lack of limited edition hardware and exclusive accessories in Europe greatly contributed to the superiority of the Eastern appeal. Sega released only two versions of the console in PAL territories, featuring minor cosmetic changes that a quick glance wouldn't reveal. This inevitably left both iterations of the hardware neither desired nor highly regarded amongst collectors. Once again, it should come as no surprise that those looking to invest in exquisite Sega Saturn hardware will have to look towards Japan. The Eastern selection featured promotional units linked to horse racing simulators, systems with built-in LCD screens and even units brandishing the mark of Sonic the Hedgehog. But it didn't end there. Keyboards, dual arcade sticks, flight sticks, floppy disk drives and even the exquisite *Virtual On* Twin Sticks made their way onto Sega's production



DID YOU KNOW?

■ There were a number of different variants released for the Sega Saturn, but only two models made it to the UK. Things were far more interesting in Japan, with 12 different models (including small numbers of the original prototype) available. The most well known are the HST-3220, which is the same colour as the Dreamcast, and the translucent This Is Cool Saturn, but far more unusual and rare is Hitachi's HiSaturn Navi, which features an optional LCD screen.

» We still feel the Sega Saturn's pad is one of the best around, especially if you play fighters and shoot-'em-ups.

» If you needed further proof of the Saturn's coolness then look at this ace Japanese model. It comes with matching pads too.

line. Luckily enough, PAL gamers can rest easy, as the majority of these unique accessories are capable of working on any region's console.

With a meagre count of just ten exclusive releases arriving in PAL regions, it was clear that Japan definitely got the better end of the deal when it came to exclusives. The transient appearances of titles such as *Swagman* are often surrounded by collectors worldwide, all hoping to snap up the sub-par adventure game for nothing other than its rarity. Another exclusive release worth mentioning which tends to generate a lot of attention is *Frankenstein: Through The Eyes Of The Monster*, due to the prominent in-game appearance from British actor Tim Curry. Unfortunately, the remainder of the exclusive selection has little to offer other than the thrill and excitement of filling gaps on the shelves.

Accepting that sales were off to a poor start in Europe and Australia, Sega began looking at alternative ways to advertise its games. Adopting a similar approach as seen with home computer magazines, *Official Sega Saturn Magazine* began supplying a cover disc packed with snippets from upcoming game releases free with each issue. While the original run of Sega Flash cover discs are sought after, the most treasured freebies are somewhat more complete offerings. In December 1997 a seasonal version of *NiGHTS* (*Christmas NiGHTS*) saw release via the cover of the magazine, featuring a selection of winter levels, festive outfits and a hidden appearance from Sonic the Hedgehog. Sega later brought the first disc of *Panzer Dragoon Saga* onto the magazine's cover in hope that gamers who found themselves lured into the massive adventure would purchase the remaining discs to continue their quest. These once-free supplements have now faced growing demand from completists, but at the time these attempts were sadly too little, too late for survival.

As the Sony PlayStation eventually steamrolled the competition, the failure of the Sega Saturn came as a real surprise, especially when you look at the quality of the games that were available on the system. A large selection of high-quality releases such as *Sega Rally*, *Virtua Fighter 2*, *Virtua Cop*, *Daytona USA* and *Baku Baku* can effortlessly be found at pocket money prices. But unlike many other retro gaming systems, the majority of the elusive rarities for the Sega Saturn offer an equilibrium of both gameplay and scarcity. For example, the last documented PAL release – *Deep Fear* – is now considered to be one of the most enjoyable titles on offer, and certainly one of the most difficult to find. Alongside *Deep Fear*, the likes of *Keio Flying Squadron 2*, *Dragon Force*, *Mortal Kombat Trilogy*, *Mega Man X3* and *Hebereke's Popoitto* all sit tantalisingly out of reach, remaining equally enticing to both collectors and gamers.

Despite having such a small selection on offer, the quaint PAL Sega Saturn collection is still incredibly desirable for collectors. With its fair share of classics and wealth of undiscovered import gems, you can expect many new gamers to surface as they begin to tackle the mysteries of this established yet enigmatic console from Sega.

THE PERIPHERALS

» In addition to allowing for far more saves, the Action Replay cartridge also enabled you to play RAM-intensive games. Handy.

» It might not look very special, but Datel's Action Replay cartridge was a boon to importers of Sega's console.

ACTION REPLAY

Advertised as the ultimate cheating device for the Sega Saturn, the true capabilities of Datel's Action Replay were hidden deep beneath the infinite lives and level select cheats included. Often referred to as the Swiss Army Knife for the Sega Saturn, the Action Replay cartridge had just about everything going for it.

One of the most commonly discussed flaws of the Sega Saturn was its reliance on an internal battery to manage save game files. Using the same weak battery found in Sega Dreamcast Visual Memory Units, the short-lived CR2032 was often found drained within only weeks of gaming. To resolve the issue of disappearing save files, Sega released the Backup Memory cartridge to offer a more robust solution to saving data. Needless to say, Datel offered a very similar inclusion as one of the other four features packed into the Action Replay. While it couldn't act as a real-time save device, it offered just as much storage space as the official cartridge for copying over internal memory save files.

As developers began to push the Saturn to its limits, it became clear that certain games would require RAM to store further graphics and data. To remedy this, expansion cartridges designated for the expansion port came bundled with larger games to enhance the system's capabilities. Arriving as either a 1MB or 4MB expansion cartridge, these official enhancements rarely left the box, as the Action Replay had all the bases covered by offering (depending on the model) up to 4MB of on-board RAM.

The most treasured addition to the Action Replay was one rarely mentioned by Datel, presumably to avoid any conflict with Sega. Deep within the Action Replay lay the ability to enable the Sega Saturn to load games from any region without the need for internal modifications. With the cheat cartridge inserted and Action Replay menu on-screen, the internal region check code is bypassed, enabling import games to be loaded onto the system. With the likes of Japanese-exclusive releases such as *Bubble Symphony, Radiant Silvergun, Psychic Killer Taromaru* and *Battle Garegga* capable of loading on a PAL system, this feature became an almost essential addition to any import gamer's arsenal.

Despite Datel owning the Action Replay name, it wasn't long before Hong Kong-based company EMS joined in on the fun and released its own cartridge under the same name. At this point there were several versions available, often confusing gamers as to what each device was capable of. Although offering the described features, the original release from Datel is often referred to as the bare-bones cartridge due to its limited 1MB RAM expansion. EMS's later release, often dubbed as the Action Replay 4M Plus, built upon the success Datel had created by expanding the available RAM memory to a whopping 4MB. Although only a small selection of Capcom's fighting games required the full 4MB expansion, the EMS Action Replay 4M Plus became the one to guarantee optimal performance from the cartridge.

...AND THE REST



01. Virtua Gun

The iconic blue Sega Saturn Virtua Gun came bundled with either *Virtua Cop* or *House Of The Dead* in PAL regions. It could also be purchased individually in a shade of red for those seeking two-player action. With a minuscule count of just over ten compatible games released worldwide, the potential of this accessory was surely untapped.

02. 3D Control Pad

Arriving a whole year before Sony PlayStation introduced the Dual Analog control pad, the 3D Control Pad originally made its way onto shop shelves bundled with the exhilarating *NiGHTS Into Dreams*. Despite having a huge selection of compatible games, the talking point for this accessory is often its obvious blueprint for the future Sega Dreamcast control pad.

03. Virtua Stick

Sega's initial answer to the arcade stick was met with striking criticism due to the substandard stick and buttons on board. While Japan was lucky enough to see a second revision with much higher-quality components and a stunning colour palette, PAL gamers were left to import Sega's later offering.

04. Backup Memory

If there was ever a shortcoming with the Sega Saturn, it was the lack of reliable onboard memory for archiving those cherished game saves. While the system was capable of storing a handful of saves on its own, the Backup Memory cartridge offered a massive 16 times the amount of currently available storage space.

05. Magic Card V2

This elusive and unofficial cartridge rarely rears its head, but when it does you can expect the collectors and pirates to congregate. Offering a stock Sega Saturn the ability to run backup discs with no modifications whatsoever, it's safe to say this unusual cartridge is particularly desirable and sought after.

06. Photo CD Operating System

As Sega attempted to sculpt the Saturn into a multimedia system capable of displaying personal photographs, its futuristic insight was a little too early for those still sporting traditional film cameras. While its purpose today is far from useful, it's often regarded as one of the harder-to-find accessories.

07. Arcade Racer

With the majority of racing games on the Sega Saturn falling into the arcade genre, there was little need for a replica steering wheel. However, those seeking to add a new dimension to the likes of *Sega Rally* and *Daytona USA* were pleasantly surprised by the addition of analog input, enabling precise turns around every corner.



The Collector's Guide

TOP GAMES TO PLAY

Shining Force III
■ Without a doubt, *Shining Force III* was the pinnacle of the immersive turn-based tactical role-playing series, previously seen on the Sega Mega Drive.

NiGHTS Into Dreams
■ Those recurring flying dreams we all experience became immortalised on the Sega Saturn with Sonic Team's bizarre *NiGHTS*, the most enjoyable dream-'em-up ever created.

Saturn Bomberman
■ Featuring support for up to ten players at once, *Saturn Bomberman* was the ultimate party game for those hosting a multiplayer evening of explosive gaming.

Guardian Heroes
■ After the success of *Gunstar Heroes*, Treasure returned with *Guardian Heroes*, a cross between a side-scrolling beat-'em-up and a character-developing RPG.

Burning Rangers
■ Taking on board the role of a futuristic firefighter, Sonic Team's *Burning Rangers* saw gamers tackling an addictive range of emergencies in need of expertise.

PLAY THESE NEXT



Virtua Fighter 2
■ Even today, this remains a truly astonishing port. Ridiculously smooth and featuring all the characters from the hit arcade game, it's a stunning achievement and remains one of the Saturn's best 3D fighters. It may only feature 11 fighters, but don't let that put you off, as it's an incredibly deep, rewarding fighter.



Sega Rally Championship
■ There's a reason why you'll still find Sega's ancient racer in arcades all around the land: it's simply a staggeringly good racer that still plays brilliantly today. The Saturn port is particularly impressive, running at a great frame-rate and featuring all the thrills and spills of its arcade parent. An unmissable racer.



Panzer Dragoon II Zwei
■ The first game dropped jaws to the floor, but Team Andromeda's stunning sequel ensured they stayed there. Branching levels, an evolving dragon and a devastating Berserk mode add to an already impressive game, while the bosses and new environments are simply magnificent. A truly stunning sequel.



Sonic R
■ Sonic may not have had a proper platform outing on Sega's machine, but this is a more than acceptable alternative for fans of the blue hedgehog. Created by Traveller's Tales and fuelled by a wonderfully bouncy soundtrack by Richard Jacques, it's an amazingly fun racer full of tight track design and plenty of hidden secrets.



Baku Baku
■Like many of the Saturn's best games, *Baku Baku* started off in the arcades (as *Baku Baku Animal*). It's an excellent versus puzzle game that features fast-paced gameplay and a superb multiplayer mode. Considering the lack of genuinely decent puzzlers on the system, it's a must-have that every Saturn collector needs to own.

TOP IMPORT GAMES

Psychic Killer Taromaru

■ Fans of the Sega Mega Drive hits *Revenge Of Shinobi* and *Mystic Defender* will feel right at home here, and will question this sleeper's lack of English localisation.

Radiant Silvergun

■ Although many shoot-'em-up fans will tell you there are far better choices available, *Radiant Silvergun* brought a huge selection of bullet hell fans out of the woodwork.

Battle Garegga

■ If there ever was such a thing as a perfect arcade conversion on the Sega Saturn, it's the frantic too-much-on-screen-at-once shooter *Battle Garegga*.

Bubble Symphony

■ Featuring a range of cameo appearances from other Taito classics, Bub and Bob return in a Japanese exclusive of the arcade hit from the *Bubble Bobble* series.

Elevator Action Returns

■ When Taito rolled out an update to its 1983 classic *Elevator Action*, the developer went all-guns-blazing by including just about every possible action-movie element.

IMPORT THESE NEXT



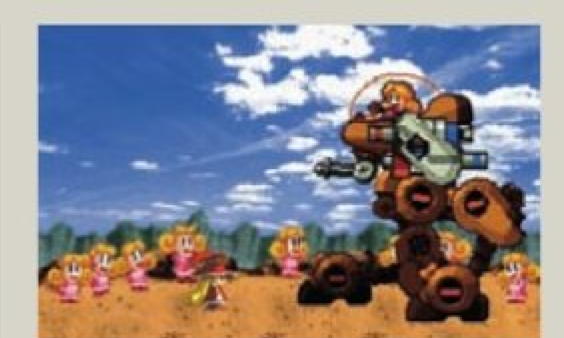
Akumajou Dracula X: Gekka no Yasoukyoku

■ While it's not quite as smooth as its PlayStation counterpart, *Symphony Of The Night* still appeals to collectors due to its exclusive extras that included additional characters and two new areas. It may be let down by poor coding, but there's no denying the brilliance of Konami's game-changing *Castlevania*.



DoDonPachi

■ While some prefer Cave's original (also available on Sega Saturn), it's the sequel that we constantly find ourselves returning to. Fast and furious, and featuring plenty of subtle enhancements to the core gameplay of *DonPachi*, it's an excellent example of Cave's mastery of the genre and should be in every shoot-'em-up fan's collection.



Silhouette Mirage

■ You can always trust Treasure to come up with interesting themes for its games and *Silhouette Mirage* is no exception. It's a run-and-gun like *Gunstar Heroes*, but features clever duality mechanics that would later resurface to great effect in *Ikaruga*. Sadly, unlike the PlayStation version it never received a US release.



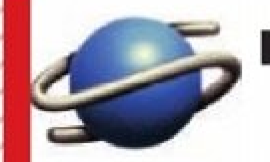
Shippu Mahou Daisakusen (Kingdom Grand Prix)

■ Absolutely barmy arcade game from Raizing that combines the shoot-'em-up and racing genres to surprisingly good effect. It's an ingenious concept that sees you holding down the fire burron to boost, while continually tapping it in order to shoot down enemies. It's flawlessly ported to the Saturn as well.



Soukyugurentai Otokuyo

■ Also known as *Terra Diver* and bizarrely published by Electronic Arts, *Soukyugurentai* is quite an unusal horizontal shooter, as it features a 4:3 ratio (like *Radiant Silvergun*) rather than the usual 3:4 layout. It's also a great blaster in its own right, with challenging level design, superb enemies and a gritty, distinct graphical style.

 The Collector's Guide

TOP RAREST PAL GAMES

Enemy Zero

■ Picking up where the failed Sega Mega CD FMV games left off, *Enemy Zero* was a fantastic retelling of the genre based upon the foundations of WARP's earlier release, *D*.



Mr Bones

■ This platform adventure not only packs an impressive rarity, but also tells a humorous tale of a resurrected 19th century rural southerner who is attempting to save the world.





Hebereke's Popoitto

■ Following an abundance of *Puyo Puyo* games released in Europe, the puzzle genre was left wide open for Sunsoft to conquer with this frustratingly difficult game.



Deep Fear

■ Despite being the most obvious *Resident Evil* clone to date, this undersea horror still holds its fair share of suspense for those seeking both excitement and scarcity.



Dragon Force

■ With the likes of *Shining Force III* and *Panzer Dragoon Saga* casting a sizable shadow over other RPGs, *Dragon Force*'s colossal battles alone make this a worthy purchase.



GET THESE NEXT



Mega Man X3

■ This ace platformer is almost as hard to find as it is difficult to play. A polished port of the SNES game, it features a number of enhancements and was also released on Sony's PlayStation. A limited release towards the end of the Saturn's life makes it now very hard to find. It's worth seeking out though, as it's a great addition to your collection.



Swagman

■ *Swagman* was one of the Sega Saturn's ten PAL exclusives and, as a result, is getting ridiculously hard to find nowadays. Unfortuantely, rarity isn't always an indication of the game's quality, and the end result is a rather bland action adventure game that only truly hardcore collectors will actually want to covet.



Dragon Ball Z

■ Two *Dragon Ball* games were released for the Saturn, but only this one reached the UK. While not sensational, it's an interesting take on the conventional beat-em-'up, featuring 2D sprites in three-dimensional levels. A fairly late release and the general lack of interest in the *Dragon Ball* license (at the time at least) assures its rarity.



Keio Flying Squadron 2

■ Unlike the Mega CD original, this gloriously cute sequel from Victor Entertainment is a more traditional platformer that once again focuses on the impossibly cute Rami. One interesting aspect of this sequel is that, while the PAL and US versions scroll from left to right, the Japanese game is the complete opposite.



Mortal Kombat Trilogy

■ Released fairly late in the Saturn's life, *Mortal Kombat Trilogy* is now proving to be a right nightmare to find, even if it doesn't really boast an exceptionally excessive pricetag. Greatly improving on *Mortal Kombat II* and *III* (which are also available) it's an impressive package of the first three games that will please any fan.

THE JEWEL IN THE CROWN

During its life, the Saturn didn't earn many elaborate collector's editions. What it does have, however, is one of the finest RPGs of all time, and if you don't have the excellent Panzer Dragoon Saga in your collection you really shouldn't call yourself a collector



















The Disks

■ If you needed further proof of *Panzer Dragoon Saga*'s sheer scope and size then consider the number of discs that it actually came on. This gargantuam game came on four disks, the first of which was given away by the *Official Sega Saturn Magazine*.



The Game

■ There's a reason why *Panzer Dragoon Saga* still commands crazy prices on eBay. It's not only one of the Saturn's best games, but also one of the best RPGs of its time. Full of imagination and innovative ideas, it's a marvelous game that everyone should play.



The Packaging

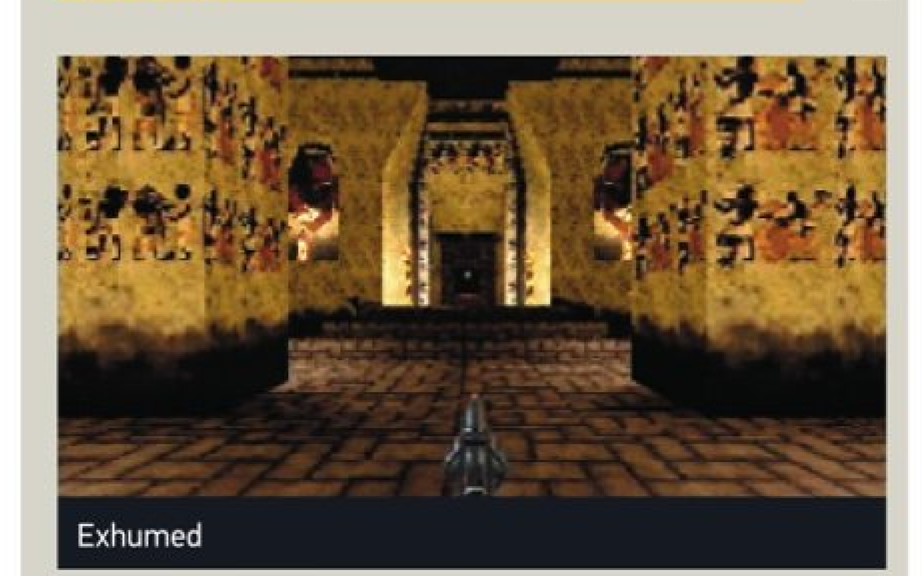
■ Due to *Panzer Dragoon Saga* coming on four disks, Sega needed to ship the game with an additional plastic case. A rather flimsy cardboard box was used to hold the package together, and it can be quite hard to find a copy of the game complete with it.

Special thanks to Jonathan Town for lending us his white Sega Saturn



THE COMPLETE CHECK LIST OF PAL SEGA SATURN GAMES*

- 3D Lemmings
- AMOK
- Actua Golf
- Actua Soccer: Club Edition
- Alien Trilogy
- Alone in the Dark: Jack Is Back
- Andretti Racing
- Arcade's Greatest Hits: The Atari Collection 1, Midway Presents
- Area 51
- Athlete Kings
- Atlantis: The Lost Tales
- Baku Baku
- Batman Forever: The Arcade Game
- Battle Arena Toshinden Remix
- Battle Arena Toshinden URA Ultimate Revenge Attack
- Battle Monsters
- Battle Stations
- Black Dawn
- Black Fire
- Blam! Machinehead
- Blast Chambers
- Blazing Dragons
- Break Point
- Bubble Bobble Also Featuring Rainbow Islands
- Bug!
- Bug Too!
- Burning Rangers
- Bust-A-Move 2: Arcade Edition
- Bust-A-Move 3
- Casper
- Chaos Control
- Christmas NiGHTS Into Dreams
- Clockwork Knight
- Clockwork Knight 2
- Command & Conquer
- Courier Crisis
- Crimewave
- Croc: Legend of the Gobbos
- The Crow: City of Angels
- Crusader No Remorse
- Crypt Killer
- Cyber Speedway
- Cyberia
- D
- Darius Gaiden
- Darius II
- Dark Savior



Exhumed



Guardian Heroes

- Darklight Conflict
- Daytona USA
- Daytona USA Championship Circuit Edition
- Deep Fear
- Defcon 5
- Destruction Derby
- Die Hard Arcade
- Die Hard Trilogy
- Digital Pinball
- Discworld 2 Missing Presumed…!?
- Doom
- Dragon Ball Z
- Dragon Force
- DragonHeart Fire & Steel
- Duke Nukem 3D
- Earthworm Jim 2
- Enemy Zero
- Exhumed
- F-1 Challenge
- FIFA '97
- FIFA Road To World Cup '98
- FIFA Soccer '96
- Fighter's Megamix
- Fighting Vipers
- Firestorm: Thunderhawk 2
- Formula Karts Special Edition
- Frank Thomas Big Hurt Baseball
- Frankenstein Through The Eyes Of The Monster
- Galactic Attack
- Galaxy Fight
- Gex
- Ghen War
- Golden Axe The Duel
- Grid Run
- Guardian Heroes
- GunGriffon
- Hang-On GP '96
- Hardcore 4x4
- Heberekes Popoitto
- Hexen
- Hi-Octane
- Highway 2000
- The Horde
- The House Of The Dead
- Impact Racing
- The Incredible Hulk: The Pantheon Saga
- Independence Day
- International Victory Goal
- In The Hunt
- Iron Max X-O Manowar In Heavy Metal



- Jewels Of The Oracle
- Johnny Bazookatone
- Jonah Lomu Rugby
- Keio Flying Squadron 2
- The King Of Fighters '95
- Krazy Ivan
- Last Bronx
- Loaded
- Lost Vikings 2: Norse By Norsewest
- The Lost World: Jurassic Park
- Madden NFL'97
- Madden NFL '98
- Magic Carpet
- The Mansion Of Hidden Souls
- Manx TT Superbike
- Marvel Super Heroes
- Mass Destruction
- Maximum Force
- MechWarrior 2: 31st Century Combat
- Mega Man X3
- Mighty Hits
- Mortal Kombat II
- Mortal Kombat Trilogy
- Mr. Bones
- Myst
- Mystaria The Realms Of Lore
- NASCAR '98
- NBA Action
- NBA Action '98
- NBA Jam Extreme
- NBA Jam T.E.
- NBA Live 97
- NBA Live 98
- NFL Quarterback Club '96
- NFL Quarterback Club '97
- NHL 97
- NHL 98
- NHL All-Star Hockey
- NHL All-Star Hockey 98
- NHL Powerplay
- Road & Track Presents: The Need For Speed
- NiGHTS Into Dreams
- Night Warriors: Darkstalkers' Revenge
- Off-World Interceptor Extreme
- Olympic Soccer
- PGA Tour '97
- Pandemonium!
- Panzer Dragoon
- Panzer Dragoon II Zwei



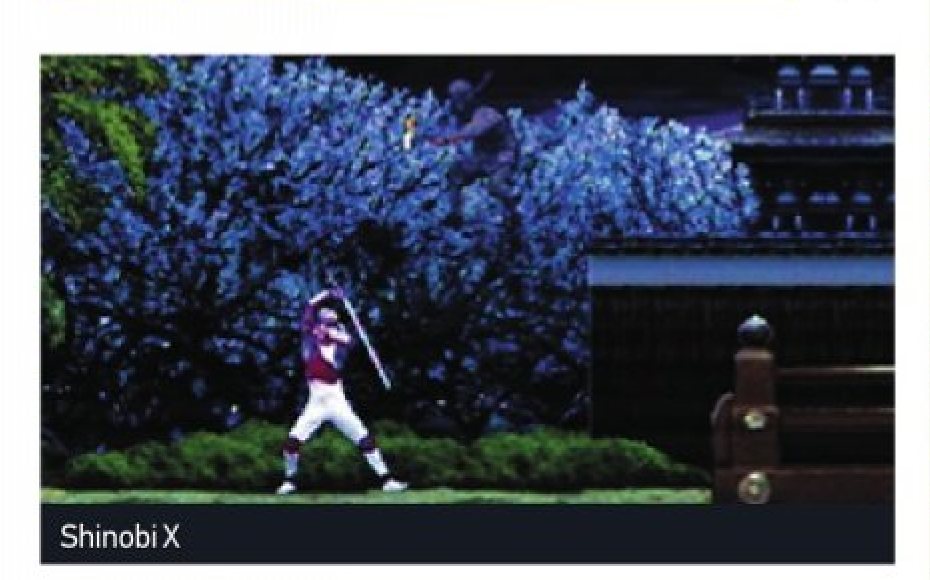
Saturn Bomberman

EXTREMELY RARE	VERY RARE	RARE	UNCOMMON	COMMON	VERY COMMON
Games that have less than a few dozen known copies available.	Very hard to come by. Expect to see only a couple of copies per year.	You should be able to source these in a reasonable amount of time.	You won't find them straight away, but you will after a search.	Always just a click away for the average collector.	So common you'll find them in most bundles of games you buy.

- Panzer Dragoon Saga
- Parodius
- Pebble Beach Golf Links
- Photo CD Operating System
- Pinball Graffiti
- Primal Rage
- Pro Pinball: The Web
- Quake
- Rampage World Tour
- Rayman
- Resident Evil
- Resurrection: Rise 2
- Revolution X: Music Is The Weapon Featuring
- Featuring Aerosmith
- Riven: The Sequel To Myst
- Road Rash
- Robo Pit
- Robotica Cybernation Revolt
- Saturn Bomberman
- Scorcher
- Sea Bass Fishing
- Sega Ages Volume 1
- Sega Rally Championship
- Sega Touring Car Championship
- Sega Worldwide Soccer '97
- Sega Worldwide Soccer '98
- Shellshock
- Shining Force III
- Shining The Holy Ark
- Shining Wisdom
- Shinobi X
- Shockwave Assault
- Sim City 2000 The Ultimate City Simulator
- Skeleton Warriors
- Sky Target
- Slam'n Jam '96 Starring Magic & Kareem
- Sonic 3D: Flickies' Island
- Sonic Jam
- Sonic R
- Soviet Strike
- Space Hulk Vengeance Of The Blood Angels
- Space Jam
- Spot Goes To Hollywood
- Starfighter 3000
- Steep Slope Sliders
- The Story Of Thor 2
- Street Fighter Alpha 2
- Street Fighter Alpha: Warrior's Dreams



- Street Fighter Collection
- Street Fighter: The Movie
- Street Racer
- Striker '96
- Super Puzzle Fighter II Turbo
- Swagman
- Tempest 2000
- Terry Pratchett's Discworld
- Tetris Plus
- Theme Park
- Three Dirty Dwarves
- Tilt!
- Titan Wars
- Tomb Raider
- Torico
- Trash It
- True Pinball
- Tunnel B1
- UEFA Euro '96 England
- Ultimate Mortal Kombat 3
- Valora Valley Golf
- Victory Boxing
- Virtua Cop
- Virtua Cop 2
- Virtua Fighter
- Virtua Fighter 2
- Virtua Fighter Kids
- Virtua Fighter Remix
- Virtua Racing, Time Warner's Interactive
- Virtual Golf
- Virtual Hydlide
- Virtual On: Cyber Troopers
- Virtual Open Tennis
- Warcraft II: The Dark Saga
- Whizz
- Wing Arms
- Winter Heat
- WipEout
- WipEout 2097
- World Cup Golf: Professional Edition
- World League Soccer '98
- World Series Baseball
- World Series Baseball II
- Worms
- WWF In Your House
- WWF Wrestlemania Arcade Game
- X-Men: Children Of The Atom
- Z

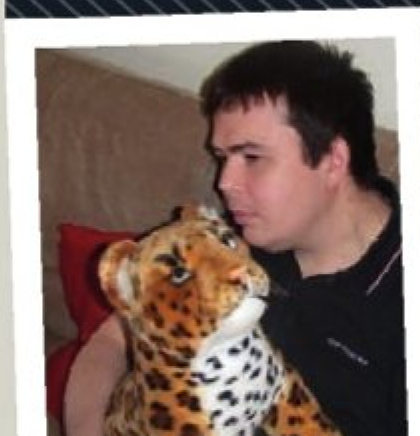

Shinobi X



Sonic Jam

Collector Q&A

This month we've managed to track down Jonathan Town, who's a huge fan of Sega's 32-bit console



■ What drew you to collecting on the Saturn?
I didn't set out to collect – I bought the games as they came out and just never sold any. The collection naturally grew, so now I'm just sourcing the final games still I need for personal completion.

■ How long have you been collecting for?
Since 1996. I remember seeing *Street Fighter Zero* and *Sega Rally* at a friend's house. Both games were better than they were in our local arcade – remixed music, extra modes, et cetera. I had to have a Saturn, so I looked for one in the Free Ads, and strangely someone was selling a Japanese Machine with *Street Fighter Zero* and *Fighting Vipers*. I snapped it up and have been collecting (and playing!) since.

■ Why the focus on Japanese games?
At the time it was the only way to go – 60Hz, earlier release dates and, of course, loads of games that never saw the light of day in the UK. I personally think the difference between having a UK Saturn and the Jap one is so vast it's like a different console.

■ How hard is it getting complete versions?
It was difficult before the internet boom, but now it's pretty simple providing you have the money. The usual 'rares' aren't as rare as people think they are; there's always a *Taromaru* or *Radient Silvergun* on eBay, for example. Ironically, cheaper games can be harder to find.

■ Which one item from your collection could you not live without and why?
My white Saturn – without it I couldn't play the games! If I had to pick one game, though, I'd either say *Panzer Dragoon Zwei* or *Burning Rangers* – two of my all-time favourite games. Or *Thunderforce V*. This question is too hard – can I pass?!

■ What's the hardest game you've had to source?
Bear in mind this was before Saturn's popularity as a collector's system, the hardest game I ever managed to get was *Hyper Duel*. It was impossible to find when it first came out, I had to get it from Japan via America and it ended up costing me around £110. This was roughly about 12 years ago.

■ What's the most you've spent on a single game?
If we are talking just Saturn, it's the previously mentioned *Hyper Duel*. I was fortunate enough to buy most of my Saturn games when they first came out.



*** Rarity guide courtesy of RetroCollect. Head to www.retrocollect.com for more information**

THE UNCONVERTED

Arcade games that never made it home





IN DEPTH

» The game features some great boss battles, made up of a nice balance of hare versus machine and tussles with many of the familiar villains in the show.

» Visually and sonically the game captures the look of the television show down to a tee, even with the original voice actors offering their vocal chords to the characters.

» Many of the dev team were Konami staffers who left to form Treasure, including Hiroshi Iuchi (director of *Radiant Silvergun* and *Ikaruga*) and Tetsuhiko Kikuchi (character designer on *Guardian Heroes*).

BUCKY O'HARE

■ **Developer:** Konami ■ **Year:** 1992 ■ **Genre:** Beat-'em-up

■ **Starring a cast of anthropomorphic animals led by a green hare dressed like Sgt Pepper, *Bucky O'Hare* began life as a comic series back in the Eighties but found true fame when it was later adapted into an animated series and took on *Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles* – the race to win kids' affections almost a modern take on an Aesop's fable; simply replace tortoise for turtle.**

Set in an alternative dimension called the Aniverse, the comic and show followed the adventures of Bucky and his crew as they battled in a galactic war against an army of militant toads and a sentient computer. Despite only running for one series, Bucky garnered enough popularity to receive his own toy line, merchandise and two videogames by Konami: the first a NES action platformer that cribbed generously from *Mega Man*; the second, this unconverted arcade game.

Bucky O'Hare is best described as a run-and-gunner rather than a beat-'em-up. Picking from four of the main characters – Bucky, Deadeye Duck, Jenny and Blinky, with many others making cameos during the game – players blasted their way through seven stages based on locations from the series, ending with a climactic battle in the Toad Star, the base of operations of Komplex and the Toad Empire.

Perhaps in a bid to ensure continuity between the game's heroes, each was equipped with the exact same weapon: a blaster that could be upgraded to a faster shot. With the only unique characteristic of each character being a melee attack and a signature special projectile, both of which you rarely use, little fun was to be had from replaying the game with different characters.

The game did pander to fans brilliantly, though. The presentation of Konami's arcade games of this era, particularly the licensed titles, was exemplary, and *Bucky O'Hare* was no different. The story, visuals and music were incredibly faithful to the source material. But better than that, the game concluded the unfinished story of the television show, making it a must-play for fans left hanging by the cartoon's short lifespan.

Why the game was never converted we suspect had to do with the abrupt cancellation of the show. With the plug pulled in 1992, the same year that this game was released, it was probably decided that there was little point in keeping Bucky's adventures alive on home consoles.



CONVERTED ALTERNATIVE

TEENAGE MUTANT NINJA TURTLES 1989

A no-brainer really. Despite being bitter rivals in telly land, *TMNT* and *Bucky O'Hare* are strongly linked in that both are Konami arcade games based on popular kids' television shows. *TMNT*, though, was converted to various 8-bit machines.

TROPICAL ANGEL

■ **Developer:** Irem ■ **Year:** 1983 ■ **Genre:** Racing



» [Arcade] It didn't take long after the in-game occurrence for the whole genre to jump the shark.

■ **A game that** could almost be considered a precursor to gimmicky arcade extreme sports titles like *Alpine Racer* and *Wave Runner*, *Tropical Angel* is a cheerful 3D checkpoint racer from Irem.

In the game you assume the role of a female waterskier and must compete in a series of classes that involve completing courses on treacherous stretches of water. With each course divided into six checkpoints, you must race to beat an incredibly generous time limit by avoiding rocks and later on other dangers such as buoys and marauding sharks that will try to bump your skier into the sea and turn her into gory flotsam.

As well as racing and surviving, you also have the opportunity to earn bonus points. This is done by either taking off from ramps that are dotted around the sea or flipping your skier through 180 degrees and racing backwards, which restricts your movement but raises your score the longer you maintain it.

There's admittedly little to *Tropical Angel* once you've mastered the basics, but we did find its straightforwardness and quirky theme oddly appealing. To be honest, though, we're starting to think we should get out more.

CONVERTED ALTERNATIVE

TOOBIN' 1988



In terms of abstract arcade titles with a water sports theme, it doesn't get more imaginative than *Toobin'*. Though not strictly a racing game, with obstacle-strewn courses to negotiate and bonus points to be won, there are parallels to be found with *Tropical Angel*.

CONVERTED ALTERNATIVE

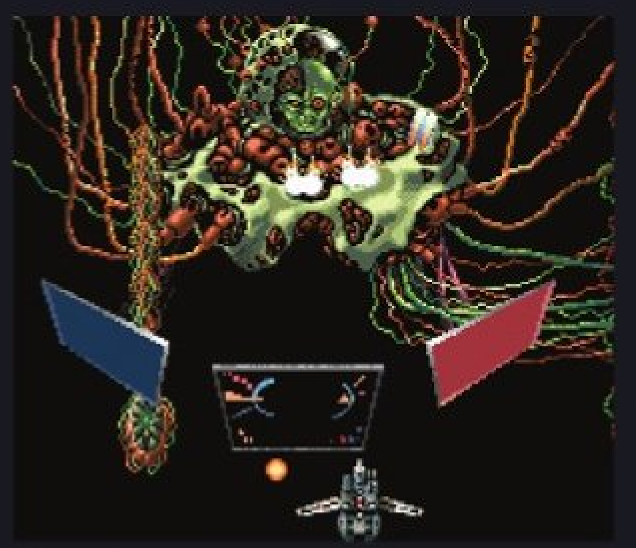
SIDE ARMS: HYPER DYNE 1986



It's not vertical, but we opted for one of our favourite shooters featuring a variable fighter: Capcom's excellent *Side Arms: Hyper Dyne*, which we have a bit of a soft spot for. The game was converted to a number of 8 and 16-bit home systems.

SUPER SPACE FORTRESS MACROSS

■ **Developer:** Banpresto ■ **Year:** 1990 ■ **Genre:** Shoot-'em-up



» [Arcade] This guy almost certainly doesn't remember love. Look at him!

■ **Famous for being** the arcade game collecting dust in Ian Beale's cafe, *Super Space Fortress Macross* is the first in a series of three coin-ops based on the popular anime series.

As we're the opposite of aficionados on the series, which is so convoluted that it would require several thousand words to explain, we won't attempt to get our heads around it but will mention that this particular game was based on a spin-off movie called *Do You Remember Love?*.

Though a solid enough shooter, we surmise that those who like consuming heavy doses of colourful and punishing Cave-style shooters will find little in the way of challenge here, and the game's visual style, while intricately detailed, is a bit on the drab side. That being said, there's a nice variety to be found in the levels, and, in keeping with the show, the Valkyrie fighters that you pilot have the ability to transform into three forms – jet, giant mech and a combination of the two – by collecting power-ups in the game.

Macross is a competent shooter but one that feels a bit flat against the genre's best titles. Fans should certainly check it out, though.

BEST LEFT IN THE ARCADE

SURVIVAL ARTS

■ **Developer:** Sammy ■ **Year:** 1993 ■ **Genre:** Fighting



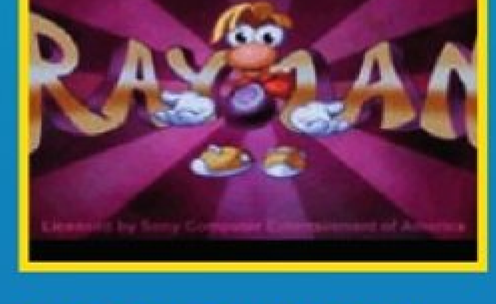
■ **It should take** no time to recognise this game as a *Mortal Kombat* cash-in. But the issue with cloning an okay game is that your game won't be much better. *Survival Arts* is laughably bad.

Possibly the most gaudy-looking object that mankind has so far been able to produce, *Survival Arts* is a digitised fighting game that adheres to all the sub-genre's signature pitfalls: it has a terrible name, looks like an ogre's arse, refreshes at a speed of ten frames per second, has a tasteless air of nihilism, and features characters so badly dressed that it looks like you're watching some grainy CCTV footage of a fight in a fetish club.

The only arguably 'original' thing is the inclusion of weapons. Ranging from handguns to swords, they get thrown into the level or can be collected by smashing level furniture. But while a nice idea, they are incredibly twitchy to use and are made ineffective as characters are simply able to block bullets using their arms.

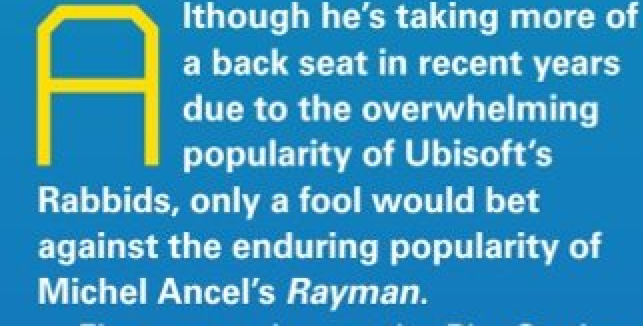
RAYMAN

Darran Jones catches up with the elusive Michel Ancel and uncovers the origins of his popular limbless hero



IN THE KNOW

- » **PUBLISHER:** UBISOFT
- » **DEVELOPER:** LUDI MEDIA
- » **RELEASED:** 1995
- » **GENRE:** PLATFORMER



Although he's taking more of a back seat in recent years due to the overwhelming popularity of Ubisoft's Rabbids, only a fool would bet against the enduring popularity of Michel Ancel's *Rayman*.

First appearing on the PlayStation right at the beginning of the machine's life, it's gone on to become a massive success for Ubisoft, with conversions of the original game appearing on everything from the PC to the Game Boy Advance and, more recently, Nintendo's DSiWare service. It might not deliver many new mechanics, but the uniqueness of its hero, its gorgeous-looking visuals and the cleverly designed stages all combined to make *Rayman* one of the PlayStation's most popular games, and it went on to spawn two 3D sequels and numerous other popular spin-offs, including the aforementioned *Rabbids* franchise.



Rayman's beginnings are shortly due to come full circle thanks to the incoming release of the episodic *Rayman Origins* for Xbox Live Arcade and PSN, so we felt it was the perfect time to catch up with developer Michel Ancel and find out how the original tale began.

"I first drew Rayman when I was just a teenager," recalls Ancel when we questioned him about the quirky character's early origins. "At the time I was simply trying to teach myself to draw, make music and write code in order to realise my dream of making videogames."

Ancel later returned to those early sketches in 1992, when he began work on *Rayman*. He'd fulfilled his dream of working in videogames at the tender age of 17, when he created a demo for French software developer Lankhor. Ancel soon met up with Nicolas Choukroun in Montpellier and began creating the visuals for some of his games, including *Pick 'N Pile* and *The Intruder*. The talented Ancel soon procured himself a bigger project in the form of *Brain Blaster*, which was eventually published by Ubisoft in 1990, paving the way for his cherished *Rayman* project.

Rayman's distinct stylings came from a number of different sources, with Ancel citing Celtic, Chinese and Russian fairytales as a major source of inspiration for the vibrant world and the unique characters that inhabit it. By far the most interesting aspect of *Rayman*, though, is the fact that when the press and public were fully embracing 3D, the game's stunning 2D visuals made it stand out from the crowd. The end result was that rather than feeling like last-gen technology – both the Mega Drive and SNES's popularity was slowly starting to fade – *Rayman* felt fresh, exciting and new.

"As a child, I spent a lot of time close to the rivers, chasing strange





“Ancel saw the new machines as a prime opportunity to get the best out of his new project”

insects, climbing on big trees,” begins Ancel when asked about the distinctive look of *Rayman*’s world. “When you’re a child, everything seems huge and extraordinary. When I started working on a *Rayman* game, it all started with trees and strange creatures.”

Ironically, *Rayman*’s distinctive 2D look when its contemporaries like *Croc: Legend Of The Gobbos* and *Crash Bandicoot* were wowing the world in 3D was due to an extremely protracted development time, which saw *Rayman* shift over a number of different computers and consoles, before finally making its debut on Sony’s PlayStation.

Rayman’s origins are reported to have started on the Super Nintendo, and while there’s some truth in that, its actual birth was on a 16-bit computer, not console.

“To tell you the truth, I actually started working alone on *Rayman* using an Atari ST,” begins Ancel. “I was doing the sound, the art, the programming and the animation. Then with Frédéric Houde, a programming friend, we decided to make a Super Nintendo CD version, but the hardware was never released! So we decided to move on to different hardware. By this time there was a big console war brewing between the likes of NEC, Nintendo, Sega, Atari, 3DO and others.”

Ancel saw the interest in the upcoming machines as a prime opportunity to get the best out of his new project. The hardware offerings gave him plenty of options, especially as he realised that interest in the Atari ST was beginning to wane and that a standalone Super Nintendo might struggle with the huge amounts of information that he wanted to put into the game.

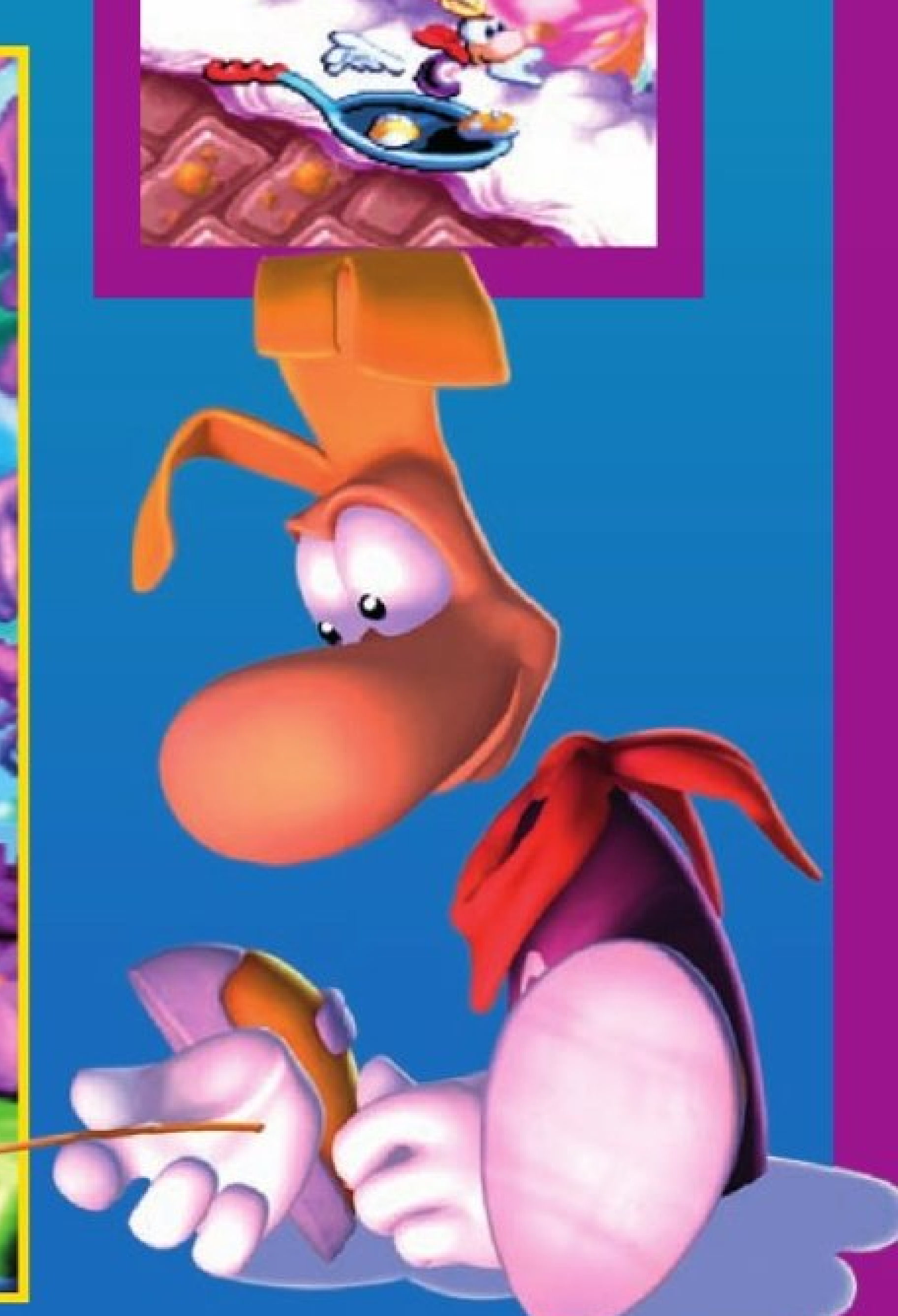
After a great deal of thought, Ancel eventually decided that the Atari Jaguar would become the final home for his new creation (although this later changed to the PlayStation). In hindsight it seems like utter madness to launch a new IP on such an unproven system, but there was reasoning behind Ancel’s decision. Atari’s machine had amazing raw power that the other systems he had been tinkering with just didn’t possess. “When the Atari Jaguar was released, I felt it was the first console that was capable of displaying our graphics,” he says.

It proved to be a wise decision, at least from a technical point of view, with *Rayman* receiving high praise at the time for its stunning visuals. “The graphics and sounds have been beautifully engineered with some great themed levels, full of soothing colour and animation. All the graphics have been done using 65,000 colours and look excellent, the scrolling is of the smoothest quality, and the control system feels exactly right and needs very little to get used

OUT ON A LIMB?

ONE OF THE most distinctive features of Rayman is that he’s completely limbless. While he does have big-gloved hands and oversized feet, they’re not actually attached to anything, which looks more than a little weird the first time you lay eyes on him. It nevertheless makes him far more memorable than many of the other platforming heroes of the late Nineties though, and we were keen to know from Ancel whether the distinctive look was a clever way of ensuring that his character left a lasting impression on the player. The actual answer is a little more mundane.

“When I was trying to get a handle on animation, I realised just how hard it is to move arms and legs convincingly,” he explains. “Since my imagination is always getting ahead of my ability to realise many of my ideas, I had to stick with what I could humbly get away with. This is still the case today. The big difference is today I’ve got fantastic artists and engineers to make up for my shortcomings. As for Rayman, he was doomed to go limbless once the concept took off on its own! And sometimes accidents like that make for the happiest results. After all, he wouldn’t have a wicked extendable punch and a ‘hairlycopter’, among other skills, if he had limbs like any other hero.”



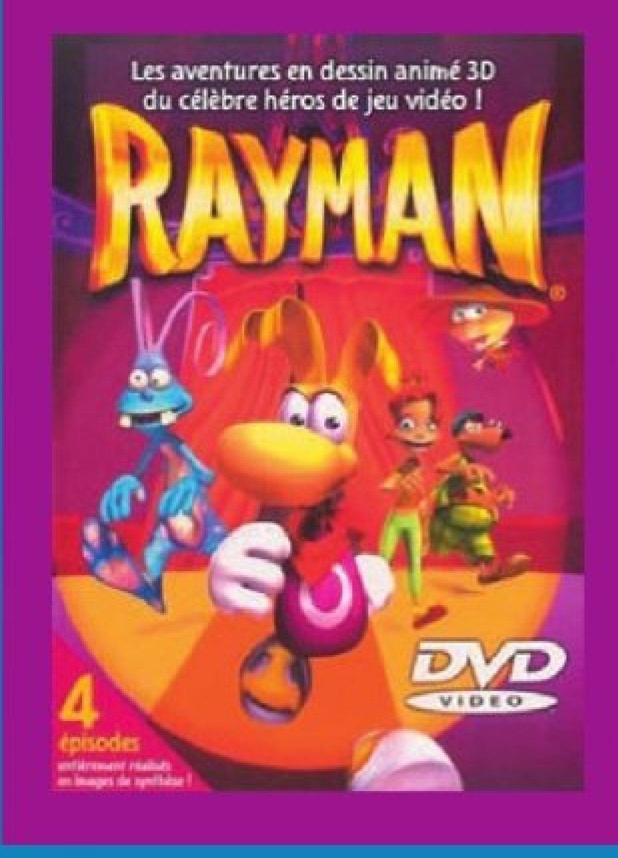


» [PSone] Ancel on *Rayman’s* rumoured two-player mode: “It was a prototype I did, but it was never included in the final game.”

RAYMAN TV

IF YOU NEEDED further proof of Rayman's popularity then how about the fact that he starred in his own TV show? Admittedly it only lasted for four episodes, but it's still an impressive achievement, especially when you consider that it's only the likes of Sonic, Mario, Pac-Man and Donkey Kong who normally manage to get their own cartoon gigs.

***Rayman: The Animated Series* was released in 1999 and was aired in a number of countries, including France,** Canada and the United Kingdom. The four completed episodes were 'LacMac Napping', 'No Parking', 'High Anxiety' and 'Big Date', but the other nine episodes were cancelled due to a lack of funds. Considering the general poor quality of the actual show – copies exist on VHS and DVD, and episodes are on YouTube if you're feeling particularly curious – this wasn't necessarily a bad thing.



to." That was the praise from popular Atari website The Atari Times, which awarded *Rayman* an impressive 92%, with reviewer Andy Robertson even cheekily saying that: "He's the star of what is that rarest of things, a GOOD Jag game. Yes, you heard me right: *Rayman* on the Jaguar is GOOD – not average or weak or pathetic or even second rate but really, really GOOD."

While *Rayman* received great acclaim on Atari's console, it's the PlayStation version that most people will have played, which is hardly surprising, as it was a phenomenal success on Sony's first console and something that Ancel still can't properly fathom.



"Honestly, I just can't explain," he began when we asked him why the PlayStation version proved so immensely popular. "It was the time of the first 3D games, like *Toshinden* and *Ridge Racer*, and *Rayman* was still 2D. Maybe the rule is that players don't really care about technical details; they just follow the fun and that's all."

If it was fun that gamers were after then they certainly found it in *Rayman*, and it just kept selling and selling. Sales for the game eventually hit over 4 million units, making it the 16th bestselling game of all time on Sony's console. Amazingly impressive, especially when you consider that above it were heavy hitters such as *Resident Evil 2*, *Tomb Raider*, *Final Fantasy VII* and *Gran Turismo*. Even more impressive is that it's the only 2D game in the top 20.

Although the Jaguar had originally impressed Ancel with its high storage capacity cartridges, it wasn't long before his focus finally switched over to Sony's machine, as he recalls: "Sony's PlayStation was not only far more powerful than the Atari Jaguar, and easier to program, but it also had CD capability, which was perfect for storing our giant textures."

While constantly switching machines allowed Ancel to ensure that his finished game would look as good as it possibly could, it also meant that development took a little longer than originally intended. "It took us around two years with the final team to complete," he confirms about *Rayman*'s development time. "[In terms of challenges], the constant change of hardware, from one console to another, was by far the biggest technical issue [we faced]."

When *Rayman* was finally released in 1995, it proved a huge success for Ubisoft, and while it was fairly conventional for a 2D platformer, it nevertheless featured plenty of character. The biggest was, of course, Rayman himself, who, unlike many other one-off heroes of the mid-Nineties, actually went on to have a significant shelf life. Utterly unique thanks to his limbless body, oversized gloves and irrepressible grin, Ancel reveals that he nailed Rayman's unique look on his very first attempt.

"Rayman is a one-shot creation," he confirms. "As soon as I started to animate him and show him, people began to get excited. It was the same for the Rabbids: you draw something, bring it to life, and it's fun right off the block. People react spontaneously and enjoy it with no important

"Maybe the rule is that players don't really care about technical details – they just follow the fun"



» [Jaguar] The Jaguar version featured a number of notable differences to its CD-ROM cousins, with certain levels and bosses being completely absent.



» [DSiWare] *Rayman* has been converted to a huge number of systems, including the PC, Saturn, DS and GBA.



» [PSone] There are a number of bosses to battle in *Rayman*, and they're all distinctive to look at.



DEVELOPER HIGHLIGHTS

TONIC TROUBLE
SYSTEMS: NINTENDO 64, PC, GAME BOY COLOR
YEAR: 1999

BEYOND GOOD & EVIL
SYSTEMS: PS2, PC, GAMECUBE, XBOX
YEAR: 2003

RAYMAN ORIGINS (PICTURED)
SYSTEMS: PLAYSTATION 3, XBOX 360
YEAR: 2011

modifications." He was also quick to clarify that the unusual look of his hero wasn't a conscious decision to make him stand apart from the other platforming characters that were doing the rounds at the time. "It's just a creative process driven by what pops out of your brain and what amuses you," he continues. "Again, when I imagined Rayman for the very first time, I was just a kid who had no idea that someday he would be standing on shelves next to the likes of Mario and Sonic."

And yet Rayman did go on to become a household name, and while it might not have set any new gameplay benchmarks, it did deliver a highly enjoyable – if rather frustrating at times – experience to anyone who played it.

The core quest of *Rayman* involved the limbless hero rescuing Electoons from their prison cages and eventually facing off against the villainous Mr Dark. Spread across six distinct levels, with delightful names such as Dream Forest and Blue Mountains, the locations are split into further sub-levels, which contain the well-hidden Electoons. Only when you've rescued every single one will you be able to finally confront the elusive Mr Dark.

Fortunately, Rayman slowly gains a number of skills from Betilla the fairy that range from the ability to punch enemies with his telescopic fists to using his hair as helicopter blades to cross otherwise impassable chasms. These powers are essential to Rayman, as they allow him to revisit previous levels, *Metroid*-style, in order to save every last Electoon.

It's all very old school, but it's executed in a charming way and is only really let down by the insane difficulty spikes that sometimes crop up. And yet for all its occasional difficulty, *Rayman* was a game that you'd continually want to return to, because it was just so damned unusual. After all, name us another game where its lead character would stop for a quick photo, skate down a mountainside on a frying pan, or high-five a weeping boss and then give him a big hug after he bested it.

Even beyond the commercial success on the PlayStation, *Rayman* has gone on to become a key pillar for Ubisoft, thanks to a large number of conversions, a handful of sequels, and plenty of spin-offs, from *Rayman Golf* to *Rayman Brain Games*. The series appears to now be returning to its 2D roots, with the imminent arrival of *Rayman Origins*, which Ancel is promising to be "an immersive and fun-to-play platformer". "After all," he concludes, "Rayman is the guy who helped get me to a place I feel lucky to be: making games and having fun doing it!"

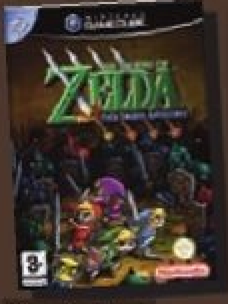
» [Xbox 360] Little is known about *Rayman Origins* at the moment, but it's certainly looking gorgeous.



Future Classic

Modern games you'll still be playing in years to come

retro GAMER
LOCK ON!
EXCITEBIKE
THE LEGEND OF ZELDA
FOUR SWORDS ADVENTURES
FEATURED IN THIS ISSUE OF RETRO GAMER
ATARI 5200
LARRY DE MAR
DYNAMIX
THE LORDS OF MIDNIGHT



INFO

- **Featured System:** GameCube
- **Year Released:** 2004
- **Publisher:** Nintendo
- **Developer:** Nintendo
- **Key People:** Toshiaki Suzuki (Director), Eiji Aonuma, Shigeru Miyamoto (Producers), Koji Kondo (Composer)

GO DEEPER

- **A manga novelisation of the game was created, featuring all four Links with distinct personalities**
- **A smaller version of *Four Swords Adventures* was available with the Game Boy Advance version of *A Link To The Past***



10. THE LEGEND OF ZELDA: FOUR SWORDS ADVENTURES

From humble beginnings, Four Swords Adventures became one of the GameCube's most enjoyable games. Darran Jones goes adventuring across a pastel-coloured field

THE BACKGROUND

The Legend Of Zelda: Four Swords Adventures was first revealed back in 2003, when Nintendo announced two new *Zelda* games that would highlight the connectivity between both the Game Boy Advance and GameCube. The first was *Four Swords*; the second was *Tetra's Trackers*. Nintendo and Capcom had already proven the merits of a four-player *Zelda* game thanks to the addition of *Four Swords* to the GBA version of *A Link To The Past*, which enabled four Links to team up and solve dungeons while they competed against each other for rupees. It was a great idea if a little rough around the edges, but was obviously the inspiration for Nintendo's new GameCube project.

Several months later, Nintendo had announced that the two games (*Four Swords* was now known as *Hyrulean Adventures*, while *Tetra's Trackers* had changed to *Navi Trackers*) would be included on the same disc and would be joined by a third title, *Shadow Battle*. *Navi Trackers* sounded particularly interesting at the time, because it included an interesting speech navigation system that would recognise player's names and notify them when it was their turn to play. Unfortunately, only Japanese gamers and importers got to experience it; it was eventually released only in Japan. However, even with just two of the original games, the Western version of *Four Swords Adventures* proved an essential release…

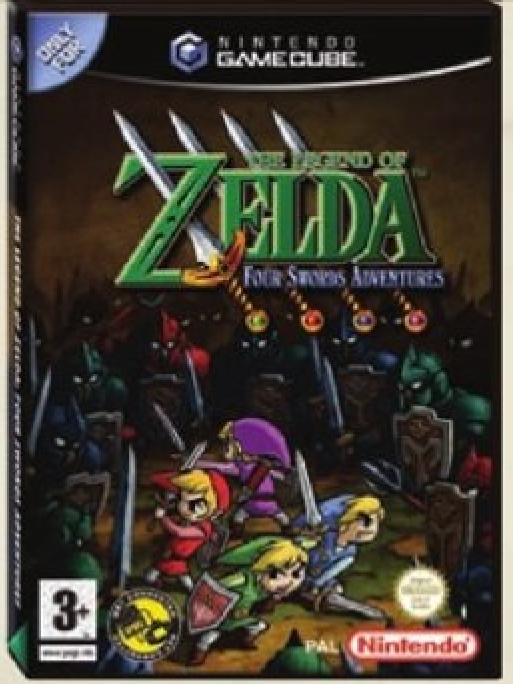
THE GAME

The meat of *Four Swords Adventures* is the excellent 'Hyrulean Adventures', which expands magnificently on Capcom's original GBA multiplayer effort.

Things of note









Link Me Do

The ability to link up to four Game Boy Advances wasn't just a nice touch, but worked very well to boot. Of course, you needed three other GBA owners first…

Old-School Link

We completely love the side-on sections that appear whenever you enter certain dungeons. They instantly remind us of the greatly underrated *The Adventure Of Link*.

GBA Not Needed

If you don't have a GBA you can still play *Four Swords Adventures*. The GBA screen appears on your TV screen whenever you enter houses or caves.

Solo Adventurer

While a big box version exists, complete with a link cable, it's also possible to buy the game separately. If you're not fussed about friends then this is your cheapest option.

Two Worlds

The chosen graphical style is very interesting. It mixes the old-style visuals of *A Link To The Past*, with the cel-shaded effects of *Wind Waker*, creating a very distinct look.



» [GameCube] While competitive play is all well and good, the real beauty of *Four Swords Adventures* comes from true teamwork.



» [GameCube] Due to the need to flit between the GBA and GameCube, limitations were made in the visual department. It still looks ace though.



What the press thought



games™
Score: 8/10
"A masterpiece that once again proves the cynics wrong and Nintendo right."

Game Revolution
Score: B
"The best example of Nintendo's connectivity plan."

Unlike the vast majority of *Zelda* games, *Four Swords Adventures* takes place over eight distinct worlds, which are further broken down into three smaller levels featuring such well known locations as Lake Hylia and Kakariko Village, and always culminate in an exciting boss encounter. It was a massive step away from the traditional sprawling worlds of both *Ocarina Of Time* and *The Wind Waker*, but perfectly suited the more arcade-style trappings of *Four Swords*' gameplay mechanics.

When playing on your own you'd typically control one Link, with the other three following you (don't worry, as you can control each one independently when needed). When using linked Links, you'll need to master four different formation styles, which cover everything from defence to setting up attack strategies and solving puzzles. While initially tricky to get to grips with, you'll soon get used to the new mechanic and, before long, will be activating switches, swapping attack formations and lobbing huge boulders many time your size without a second thought.

The arcade pace only increases further when playing with friends; while you need to work together in order to progress, the inclusion of Force Gems allows for plenty of squabbling between team-mates. At certain points of the game the screen can become filled with huge numbers of gems, which immediately cause a frantic fracas as you rush to collect them all. Collecting gems grants its own rewards, as it greatly powers your sword and enables you to break the seal at the end of each stage.

This tense competition between friends is further fuelled by the inclusion of eight fun mini-games which range from racing horses to collecting monsters. Additionally, we shouldn't forget about the separate game 'Shadow Battle', which pits you against your mates until only one Link is left standing. In fact, the only downside to the multiplayer was its reliance on four Game Boy Advances in order to play it.

Luckily, while *Four Swords Adventures* benefits greatly from playing with friends it is still a superb romp in single-player, where you were tasked with taking control of all four Links at once. Admittedly, the story is a little twee – while the ending is something you'll probably be able to see coming a mile off if you've ever played a *Zelda* game before, but it's put together with so much love and attention that you won't really mind.

It's also slowly rising in price (especially the more lavish box set that comes with a Link Cable), so be sure to grab it now and enjoy one of the most inventive games in the *Zelda* canon.

WHY IT'S A FUTURE CLASSIC

The reason we're convinced you'll still be playing this in years to come is because it's just an amazingly charming little game that offers endless replay value. While there's no denying that the main joy of *Four Swords Adventures* comes from playing with up to three other friends, the single-player mode of 'Hyrulean Adventures' is just as enjoyable ,and features an array of clever puzzles and boss encounters that linger in the memory long after you've finished the lengthy solo quest.

Yes the story is twee and overly familiar to anyone who's ever played a *Zelda* game before, and yes, the oh-so-cute visuals won't appeal to everyone, but the innovative gameplay mechanics, cleverly designed stages and frantic arcade action will constantly draw you back in to the beautiful looking world. An excellent achievement that needs a sequel.



Ian Grieve

What cherished games would you take to the island?

From Lemmings to WipEout, Ian Grieve saw Psygnosis go from Amiga pioneers to Sony superstars. He explains to Paul Drury how it's a funny old game…

Ian was one of the select few to receive this limited edition Mario artwork by Shigeru Miyamoto himself



He may have sustained a long and illustrious career in the games industry but Ian Grieve has also had a short but equally lucrative second career… as an exotic dancer.

"I was at the infamous Cheetah Lounge in Atlanta at a party organised by games' agent extraordinaire Jeff Hilbert," giggles Ian, his Scouse accent having survived the move to his current home of Reno, Nevada. "He walks in with a champagne bucket full of money and a tray of test tube shots, followed by eight strippers. It went off big time. I woke up the next morning with the mother of all hangovers, wearing a stripper's tailcoat four sizes too small and with $400 stuffed into my pants."

Yes, Ian was there when games met glamour. As head of licensing at Psygnosis in the Nineties, when the PlayStation was taking over the world, he saw the much-loved Amiga developer become central to Sony's expanding empire. He was at the very first E3, the industry's now annual extravaganza, and witnessed the diminutive Michael Jackson being chaperoned by Sony's seven-foot giant Phil Harrison. He met Murray Walker and Damon Hill at the Japanese Grand Prix in '96 while securing the F1 license. He inhaled nitrous oxide with his hero Matt Johnson in a tribute to The The's 'Gravitate To Me' video. He even managed to bring local rivals Ocean crashing to the floor…

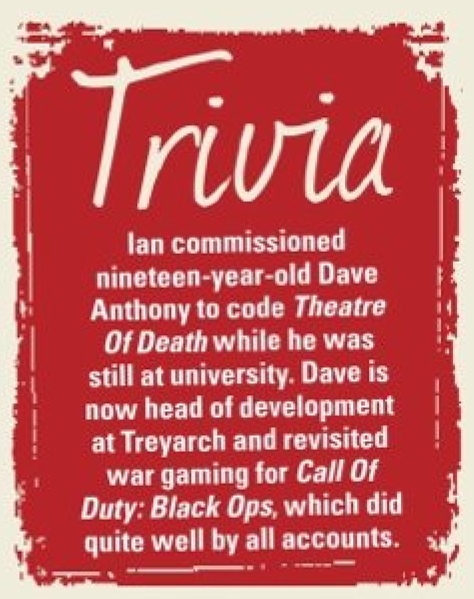
"That was mostly Tony Parkes, honest," swears Ian, grassing up his old colleague and producer of *Destruction Derby*. "Ocean had a big party at one ECTS show and they had a giant ice sculpture of their logo on display. We started chipping away at the letters and Tony could not leave it alone. Bottle after bottle of Stella and a few more chips… we wandered off after a while and there was an almighty crash as the whole thing shattered all over the floor. Naturally we denied ever being near it."

It's one way to break the ice at a party, and you sense Ian was never one to turn down an industry shindig. You also realise he never forgets a name or face and has a good word for almost everyone he's ever done business with. Early on, he recognised the importance of building relationships in the videogame world, and that writing great games was only part of the equation – you needed the commercial nous to produce and sell them too. His ability to make valuable contacts helped Psygnosis become a major player in the PlayStation generation, illustrated nicely when, at the third E3 in Atlanta, he deftly convened a meeting of some rather important folk.

"We got Terry Tokunaka, Shigeru Miyamoto, Hayao Nakayama and Ian Hetherington together in the Psygnosis suite, which was effectively the heads of Sony, Sega, Nintendo and lowly Psygnosis having a discussion about the future of gaming. The logical step was for all the big players to agree to make flagship products together from the outset, instead of back-door licensing after an initial exclusive window on one machine. It nearly worked, but apparently there was no chance in hell of an agreement being made unless it was to rope off sections of the market for each company. Shame really. What would it have been like for gamers if they had all got together and reorganised the software landscape?"

Ian talks with pride and a little disbelief at his part in proceedings. He also talks with the passion of a gamer that has never forgotten where he, or digital entertainment, came from. Growing up in Speke, a less than salubrious part of Liverpool, he recognises the sacrifices his parents made to buy him an Acorn Atom, a machine he needed to build himself before he could tap in those endless, error-filled magazine listings. His love for games and those early home micros saw him becoming part of the first cohort to take 'A' Level Computer Studies in the UK. He continued his studies at Liverpool University, the first in his family to attend higher education, which brought him to the door of one the city's early software publishers, Bug Byte, home to *Manic Miner* and Trevor Hall's *Twin Kingdom Valley*.

"I'd bought a faulty tape of one of their games, so I walked straight into their offices in Old Hall Street and said, 'Eh, this doesn't work!'" he states, with typical Liverpudlian bravado.



Trivia

Ian commissioned nineteen-year-old Dave Anthony to code *Theatre Of Death* while he was still at university. Dave is now head of development at Treyarch and revisited war gaming for *Call Of Duty: Black Ops*, which did quite well by all accounts.



"Bug Byte asked if I wanted to join them. I said, 'Are you fucking nuts? You can't make a living out of this'"

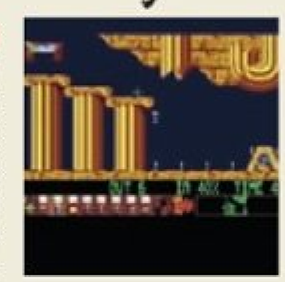
Ian later reassessed his position on this…

DESERT ISLAND DISKS

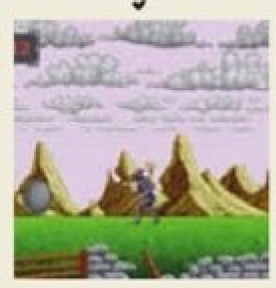
Timeline

1991 · 1992 · 1993 · 1993

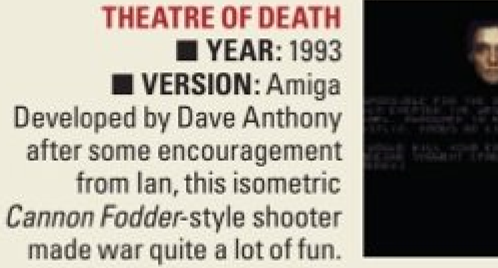
LEMMINGS
■ **YEAR:** 1991
■ **VERSION:** Amiga
The epitome of addictive gameplay. Ian helped the little rodents march onto every platform going (and off the nearest cliff).



SUPER SHADOW OF THE BEAST
■ **YEAR:** 1992
■ **VERSION:** SNES
This version was given a graphical update, signalling Psygnosis' interest in the console market.



THEATRE OF DEATH
■ **YEAR:** 1993
■ **VERSION:** Amiga
Developed by Dave Anthony after some encouragement from Ian, this isometric *Cannon Fodder*-style shooter made war quite a lot of fun.





MICROCOSM
■ **YEAR:** 1993
■ **VERSION:** FM Towns
The first fruits of Psygnosis' CD-ROM experiments which would ultimately lead to its pre-eminent position on the Sony PlayStation.





The Team On Grieve

Here's what **Retro Gamer** has to say about Ian's games…





Darran Jones
Although he's obviously not a games designer, Ian's touch on the games industry can clearly be felt. A canny eye for detail and great games has seen him involved in everything from *Lemmings* to *WipEout*, and while games like *Microcosm* weren't exactly a success, it proved Psygnosis were always prepared to try something different.





Paul Drury
Ian has been the chattiest, cheeriest and most candid castaway I've ever had, giving a unique insight into the machinations of how the games we love actually get made. This article could have been eight times longer, and that's after removing the tales of the orgiastic industry parties to protect the guilty…





Stuart Hunt
I've always been a big fan of Psygnosis games, particulary during the Amiga era, so it's fascinating to get plenty of interesting anecdotes about some of their most popular games. *Lemmings* will always be a firm favourite of mine, but I've also sunk plenty of time into the likes of *Theatre Of Death*, *WipEout* and *Colony Wars*.

"They were just a bunch of weird looking guys punching away on machines, shouting at each other. One of them said, 'There's a bin of them over there – help yourself.' Everything they'd done was in this big council bin! I filled my holdall and used to pop in every now and again and because I was studying computers, and they asked if I wanted to join them. I said, 'Are you fucking nuts? You can't make a living out of this…'"

Instead, Ian set up his own company designing computer systems for chemical plants, and games might have remained nothing more than a hobby, if, in late 1990, a certain software developer hadn't set up shop in the adjacent office. "Psygnosis moved in and I became friendly with some of the guys there, particularly Neil Thompson and Jim Bowers," recalls Ian. "When my business went bust, the owners Ian Hetherington and Jonathan Ellis called me in. I thought they were going to tell me to stop stealing their electricity and leave their staff alone but they offered me a job instead…"

It was an unexpected opportunity for both Ian and Psygnosis, who had been approached by the Department of Trade and Industry to create computer simulations to train employees at nuclear plants and other industrial settings. Despite Ian's considerable efforts, the innovative project stalled, but his professionalism and business acumen impressed the bosses enough to put him in charge of licensing for the company. Now, before you start groaning about dubious film tie-ins, licensing also involves getting a title released across a number of different platforms, and Ian arrived just as one particular game in development looked like it had legs…

"As soon as I played the first level of *Lemmings* I knew it was brilliant," he smiles. "Jonathan and Ian were so clever. They knew the only way you got it was by playing it. The idea of giving away a free demo on hundreds of thousands of disks was just marketing genius. I got heavily involved in mercilessly exploiting that game as fast as I possibly could! Sometimes we did the conversion in-house, sometimes we farmed it out to developers all over the place, like Ocean for the 8-bit versions and Sunsoft in Japan. This was all done by phone and fax. It was amazing what got done with the technology back then…"

> "If you don't finish this level today, I'm going to have you in the car park before you get in your flash car"
> *Motivational techniques the Liverpool way…*



» [Amiga] On his arrival at Psygnosis, Ian immediately set about getting *Lemmings* digging and blocking on every platform imaginable.

The set up at Psygnosis was working a treat. Their in-house art team, including such Amiga luminaries as Jeff Bramfitt, Garvan Corbett and Lee Carus, created a distinctive visual style, with the coding often handled externally before being given a superlative graphical gloss. Ian got his hands dirty with Dpaint for *Theatre Of Death*, a *Cannon Fodder*-inspired RTS game, for which he contributed graphics, but much of his time was spent making sure games got delivered on time. And he wasn't averse to using a little gentle persuasion…

"I got a deal to put *Shadow Of The Beast* on the SNES, so Garvan Corbett was roped in to make a whole new level graphically for the game and Jed Adams did the coding," he explains. "I dragged Tony Parkes, a young tester, out of the test room and made him my assistant producer. He was a kid from Croxteth, which is pretty rough. Before coming to us he was shifting fridges, and he really didn't want to go back to that. He told developers, 'Look, if you don't finish this level today, I'm going have you in the car park before you get in your flash car home.' If programmers complained to me I'd say, 'Oooh, I wouldn't cross him, he looks like he'd kick the shit out of you…'"

Effective if ethically questionable, these strong-arm tactics certainly worked in getting games onto new platforms. Though the Amiga was still the primary focus in the early Nineties, the company was always trying to stay ahead of the curve, and took a further step into the burgeoning console

Emerging from an impromptu dip in the pool at the Sunset Marquis, Hollywood are Psygnosis boys (l-r) Leon Walters, Geln O'Connel, Ian, Pete Smith and Dave Crawford

1995

WIPEOUT
■ **YEAR:** 1995
■ **VERSION:** PlayStation
Did it single-handedly make gaming cool? We always knew they were, but this stylish racer definitely helped convince the doubters.



1996



FORMULA 1
■ **YEAR:** 1996
■ **VERSION:** PlayStation
Ian secured this incredibly lucrative license, and in so doing helped Bizarre Creations really step up a gear.



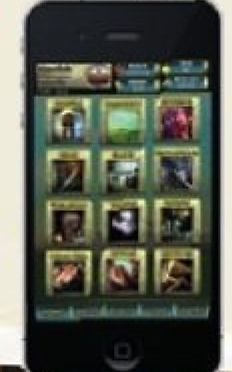
1997

COLONY WARS
■ **YEAR:** 1997
■ **VERSION:** PlayStation
The story for this space shooter came from chats between Mike Anthony and Ian, who had both lived and worked in Australia.



2011

ELYSIUM
■ **YEAR:** 2011
■ **VERSION:** Android/iOS
Due out in May this year, Ian's latest project is an RPG for mobile devices, produced with Tim Page, his partner at www.5000ft.com





» [Mega Drive] *Wiz 'n' Liz* was written for the Amiga but, in terms of game design, had the console market very much in mind.

market by converting *Wiz 'n' Liz* for the Mega Drive. As the Amiga slipped into its twilight years, Psygnosis was ready to make its mark on the new generation of consoles coming from the East. Its initial focus was on the FM Towns from Fujitsu, which contained a new-fangled device called a CD-ROM. The team began work on *Microcosm*, a *Fantastic Journey*-tinged shooter set inside the human body, taking advantage of the hugely increased storage capacity to render some impressively slick visuals.

"We thought it was a good idea to make a show-reel out of the early stage graphics and send them out to top publishers to try to co-opt them into our CD-ROM adventure," notes Ian. "I ended up making the covers for the VHS tapes myself, which had a picture of the ship hurtling up the veins of our protagonist. The batch we sent out to Sega, Nintendo and Sony was in brown with green lettering, and it was pointed out to me that it looked like a suppository going into an anal cavity."

The tape landed on the mat of Rich Robinson of Sony Imagesoft on Sunset Boulevard, Los Angeles, and, from this cheeky approach, a relationship between the two companies began that would ultimately result in Sony buying out Psygnosis. The timing was perfect; Sony was in negotiations with Nintendo to produce a new CD-based console. On his first visit to Sony in LA, Ian actually held what would eventually evolve into the PlayStation, which he describes as "a SNES with a Sony drive bolted onto it". However, when the two industry giants fell out acrimoniously, Sony decided to go it alone. The company lacked credibility in the games market, though, and was looking to recruit talented, experienced developers to their cause. It acquired Psygnosis in 1993, the huge influx of cash allowing the high-end Amigas previously used for development to be replaced by colossally expensive, state-of-the-art Silicon Graphics machines, and the Liverpool lads set about producing some of the defining titles of the early days of the PlayStation. *WipEout*, *Destruction Derby* and *Formula 1* all sold in their millions, the Psygnosis car park filled up with incredibly flash vehicles and everyone got rich and happy.

Well, almost. "Licenses were making all the money but everyone moaned that licensed games were shit," says Ian, bluntly, "and that was because they were done in half the time to hit the movie release dates. We needed a lot of money to work on the cool stuff with Silicon Graphics workstations and incredibly expensive CD mastering equipment, so the only way we could get it was to take on masses of licensed products. Of course, everyone wanted to work on the high-end stuff and nobody wanted to work on movie licenses! I think that brought some resentment into play. Development was being pulled in a direction it didn't want to go, and it wasn't explained why. The development guys see themselves as very talented, which they are, but there's also a talent in cracking a deal out of nothing and getting someone to write a very big cheque in advance and then getting a game boxed and shipped. If all you've done is make games since you were in short trousers, it doesn't occur to you where the money comes from. It was a means to an end, but crappy reviews and bad publicity were not what the developers were used to."

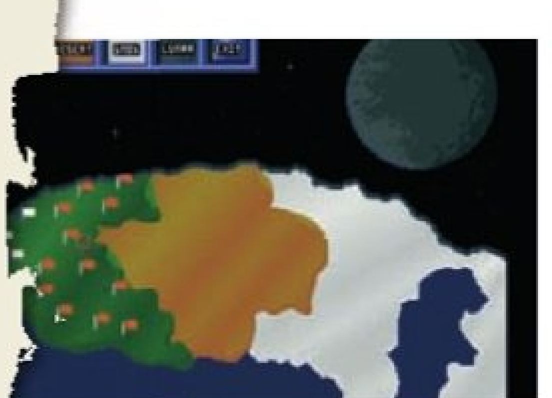
Long To Rain Over Us

Though the beleaguered British games industry has seen some major casualties in recent years, including Bizarre Creations, one of Psygnosis' closest allies, Ian suggest that all is not lost for our home-grown talent. "Everywhere you go in the industry, in the States or the Far East, you'll find a Brit near the top of a games company, I promise you," he says. "It's because of our obsession, back in the day, with crappy home computers, programming and our bad weather. That level of talent would never have had the will to stick at it in Southern California! Just to emphasise the point, Japan has bad weather and had lots of early computers, too. With the level of talent and ability we have out of the UK from that early generation of people, I don't think it'll change – I just think the dynamic of the business will. The phone in your pocket will become the perfect gaming device, and if anyone knows how to exploit that it's the UK development community."



Grieve on Grieve

Ian picks his three favourite projects from his long career



■ THEATRE OF DEATH

Dave Anthony, Mike Anthony's younger brother, obviously had some talent as a coder, so I told him he needed to do a project for me for the Amiga. We designed the premise between us, using *Platoon* for inspiration, and I did a bunch of graphics in Dpaint for it. It was a blast to make from start to finish.



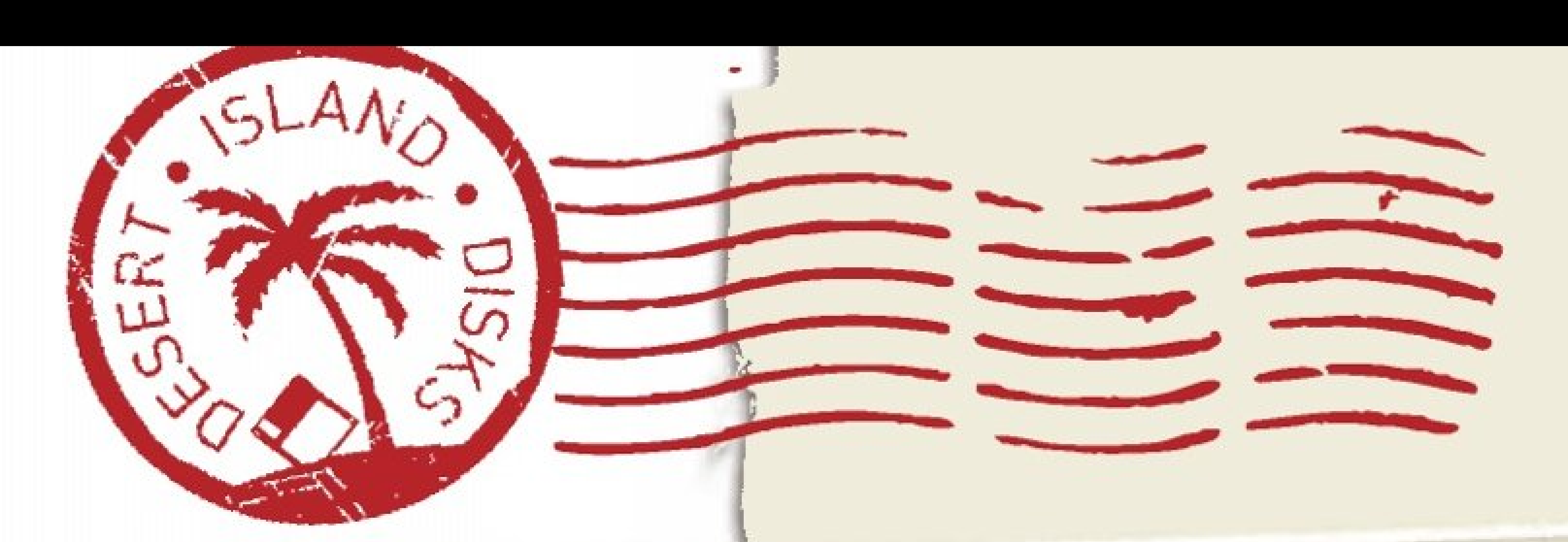
■ FORMULA ONE

There was a drive to secure the best and biggest motorsport on the planet. Tons of companies claimed to have the license but it turned out that it was run by Fuji TV in Japan, and I became friendly with their lawyer in London. The deal was done for $250K and it shifted around three million units.



■ THE THE: DUSK INTERACTIVE

While working with Sony Imagesoft on movie licenses, I had a development group in Hollywood. We made some interactive hotbox stuff using tracks from The The, a personal favorite. Matt Johnson from the band loved it, but it never got released.



Ian in downtown Reno, Nevada, the location of his current enterprise, 5000ft Ltd.

Readers' Questions

Fgasking: Did you work on any unreleased games?
I've worked on dozens that never saw the light of day! Here's one. We started doing a version of *Blade Runner* on the PlayStation. I got to meet the chairman of the *Blade Runner* Foundation on 5th Avenue in New York. It was between us and Virgin and their bid won. They made a stupid, random RTS or something. Our demo, that Neil Thompson did, had an interactive part that ran on the PlayStation and also an X-Movie that had the downtown cityscape with a huge video billboard. I was on it pulling a handgun out of a holster, shooting anyone flying by the billboard!



Fred83: What happened to the Saturn port of *Destruction Derby 2*?
[laughs] There was some political fallout between Sega and Sony when Andy Miller decided to have a slanging match with Phil Harrison. That was when the corporate pressure of Sony as market leader was taking its toll.

TheVulture: Were there plans for a follow-up to *Walker*?
That was a fantastic little game. What a stress reliever! You don't need 16 fingers to operate 24 keys and the joystick with your bum, you just go backwards and forwards killing the bastards. Yeah, there was a plan for a *Walker 2* with different vehicles, but it got canned because more important things came along.

Hitman_Halpern: Was Terry Pratchett involved with the *Discworld* games?
That game was all down to Angela Sutherland and it came to Psygnosis as a completed package. I did meet Terry, though. A terribly nice man, but to say he was a bit strange would be an understatement.

Merman: Was it easy to switch from floppy disks to CD as a medium?
We couldn't wait because we had so much data, and 18-disk games were just stupid. Plus, we were on the inside track because of our relationship with Philips and Fujitsu. We got a lot of support, particularly with video compression.

Bsg: Were you disappointed at the gaming public's lack of interest in *G-Police*?
It was a shame, as there was a lot to that game and a lot more to come. The guys at the Stroud office that made it were really talented, and *G-Police* had a lot of promise. The problem is, everyone says, 'We want innovative gameplay'… and then look at what people actually buy. Maybe it was just ahead of its time.







» [PSone] *Destruction Derby* was an early success on the PlayStation.

Money changes everything, as the saying goes. Even though Ian talks fondly of his time spent running a Psygnosis studio in LA in 1995 before returning to England and putting together the team that produced, amongst other things, the excellent *Colony Wars*, Sony's dominance of the games industry and the resulting politics, power games and endless corporate meetings inevitably affected Psygnosis. "It just wasn't as exciting and captivating as before," he sighs. "Listening to people spout off about international strategy that didn't know anything about games, who would actually say, 'I don't play games, I just sell them.' Knobheads."

Thankfully, Ian's passion for games remained undiminished, and in 1999 he left Psygnosis to join a new company in Cheadle, near Manchester. Warthog, named after a skull found in their managing director's attic, was full of old friends and much potential. "It had ex-Ocean people, ex-EA Manchester people, Dave and Mike Anthony from Psygnosis and dear, sweet John Gibson, who is a legend, and there was just a real buzz about the place," enthuses Ian. "Ashley Hall, the founder, was a great guy, too. He asked me, 'How do we go from a boutique developer to a successful outfit?' I said that you have to hit up some companies, you have to do kids' games, console games, licensed games, you have to get a range going and turn them round fast to get money in so you can get more people."

Taking a massive pay cut and waving goodbye to first class flights and swanky hotels, Ian used his contacts accrued over the years to get projects in as commercial director, including lucrative *Looney Tunes* licenses, which saw numerous *Animaniacs* and *Tiny Toon* titles appearing across various platforms at the start of the last decade. He alludes to the big deals, the bankruptcies, the buyouts, the crashed Ferraris and his eventual escape before "the lunatics took over the asylum".

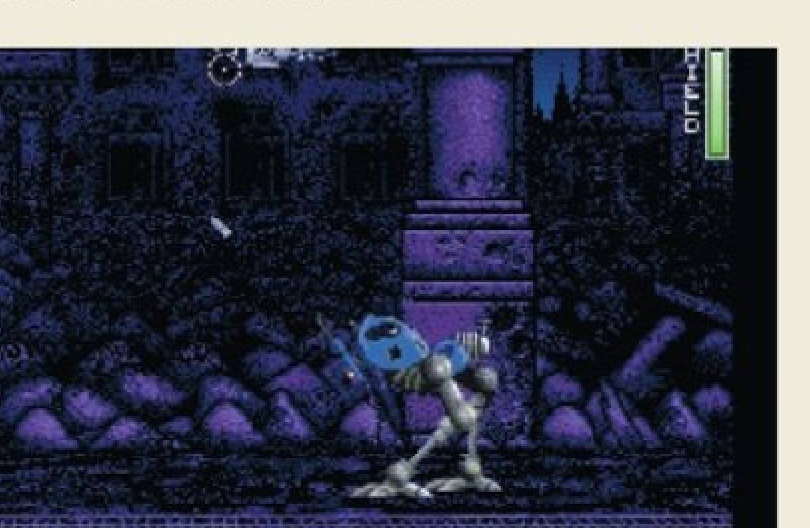
> "Brits are everywhere in the industry because of our obsession with crappy home computers, programming and our bad weather"
>
> *God save the 8-bits and rain.*

Trivia

While working on *Bram Stoker's Dracula* for Psygnosis, Ian got to meet director Francis Ford Coppola: "I blurted out, 'I love your movies,' and he replied, 'That's great, I love your games!' Turns out he was an avid videogamer."

Having moved to Reno to handle Warthog's commercial interests Stateside, he stayed there after his abrupt departure from the business in 2004, which mercifully preceded the Gizmondo takeover and undignified demise of the company. He went into partnership with Tim Page, an old friend who he'd licensed *Microcosm* and *Lemmings* to for the CDi back in 1994 when Tim had been director of development at Philips. Their company, 5000ft, began by working on a *Daredevil* tie-in for the PS2 and Xbox, but when the film suddenly went from a B-movie project to a major release starring Ben Affleck, the pair decided to move in to the world of high-end gambling machines, where their start-up has carved a profitable niche. Their casino work also involved developing handheld gambling applications and has led them to venture back into the wonderful world of videogames, with an RPG for Android and iOS devices currently in development.

So Ian, you've managed to make your fortune and still get to muck about with games, eh? What's your secret for sucess? "I love the games industry," he winks, "and if you love it, it'll love you back!"



» [Amiga] The beautifully cathartic *Walker* – a sequel was planned but never produced.

Ian Grieve

Desert Island Disks

The games that Ian Grieve just couldn't live without, and why he loves them

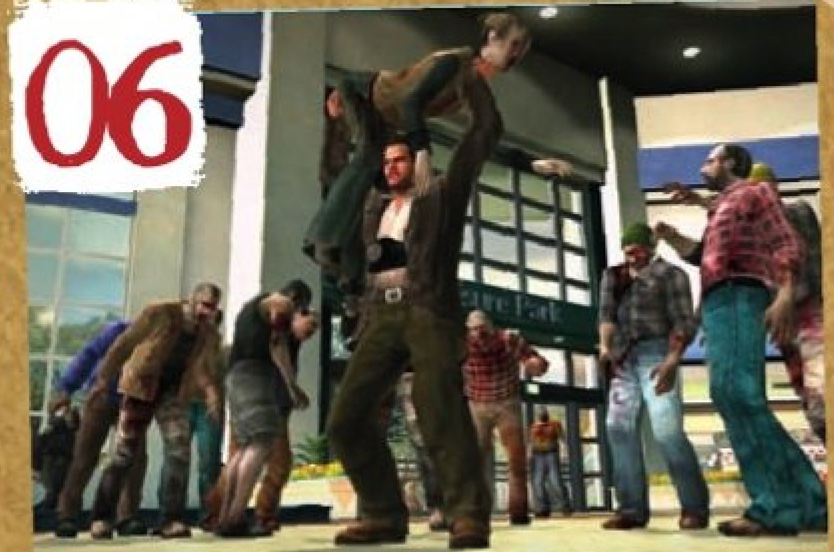

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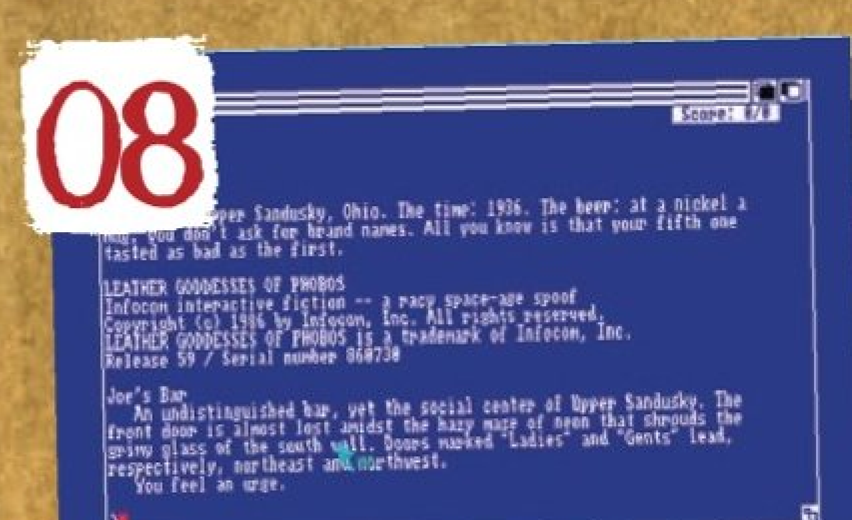

03


04


05


06


07


08

01 Command & Conquer PC

Fantastic. So much replay value, multiplayer is great fun, missions are really cool and interesting – and that irresistible god-like feeling of creating and crushing little pixels which are future armies. Still my favorite game perspective to play from.

02 Track And Field ARCADE

Insanely feeding ten-pences into it again and again with three other friends, we used to be on it for hours, coming away with blisters and bleary eyes. Just a fantastic arcade experience.

03 Fluid PLAYSTATION

A strange Japanese experiment between ambient music and a dolphin which could swim along electricity wires and through undersea temples. None of it made sense, but the ambient music was fantastic and you could collect samples and remix the songs forever. I'm still captivated by it to this day.

04 Grand Theft Auto 3 PS2

Dave Jones is an old and dear friend since the heady days of *Lemmings*. When he brought the first version of *GTA* in we looked at him like he had lost his mind and told him we would get into all kinds of shit for that. Sony would have cut our balls off for sure. Still, he took it 3D eventually and Rockstar never looked back. The game itself… well, anything that could get you to spend 30 hours trying to fly a Cessna without any wings has to be something else, doesn't it?

05 The Sims PC

I actually got so into it that I created my life in *The Sims*; same house, floor plan, a wife just like my own, even a little baby like our daughter. One day I was busy with a bunch of stuff and could not keep up with all its demands. Social services came and took the baby away in the game. My wife failed to see the funny side; I was in the real-life doghouse for weeks. We have four children now and have been together for 17 years. I'm better at real life than *The Sims*.

06 Dead Rising XBOX 360

I'm a huge zombie fan, and The *Dawn Of The Dead* premise is irresistible. Being able to use a ride-on mower to slice away at those nasty little bastards is a sheer joy. The bosses were a pain in the ass but the roaming element of the game and doing in zombies left, right and centre was just amazing. I never tire of killing zombies. Ever.

07 Red Dead Redemption XBOX 360

Grand Theft Auto in the Wild West – what more can anyone ask for? I came to live in Reno, next to Carson City and Virginia City, where the real Wild West took place. Boy's Own heaven contained in a marvelous gaming package.

08 Leather Goddesses Of Phobos AMIGA

It was a toss-up between this and *Half-Life* but I had to go with an Infocom on the Amiga for the sheer massive volume of hours put into it, the imagination-inspiring text-base and the level of humor and perviness. It was way ahead of its time and would still make a fabulous product if it was made to look like *Fable*. In fact, I demand somebody make this immediately.

Earnest Evans

LIKE A PUPPET ON A STRING

» RETROREVIVAL



» MEGA DRIVE
» RENOVATION
» 1991

Created by Wolf Team, a Japanese studio that became a big supporter of the Mega-CD with the titles *Road Avenger, Cobra Command, Sol-Feace* and *Time Gal, Earnest Evans* was an interesting take on the action platform genre.

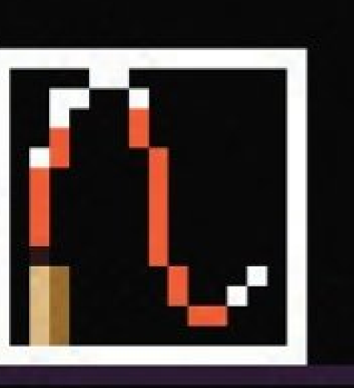
Sharing a superficial similarity to *Castlevania*, in that it mixes adventuring with horror themes, *Earnest Evans* puts you in the shoes of the titular Evans, an Indiana Jones-type adventurer who must succeed where his departed grandfather failed; by getting around a series of booby-trapped and monster-filled stages to retrieve three ancient artefacts that have the potential to destroy the planet should they fall into the wrong hands.

Though the game featured some imaginative level design – with some of the standouts stages being a cool fight through a series of train carriages against fedora-wearing agents and an underwater level in which Evans has to survive a school of piranhas – what damaged the game's appeal for me were its frustrating controls – a direct result of its interesting but ultimately maddening gimmick: Evan's limbs were made up of individual sprites that would move and animate independently of each other. Great when you want an interesting hook to help promote your new game; not so good from a gameplay point of view.

Though it made sense to design the main hero in this way – as the bite-sized stages saw the impressively animated Evans swimming, swinging from vines, crawling through cracks on his hands and knees, and climbing walls – it did have a detrimental effect on the gameplay: while it was nice touch to see a hero's body animated realistically, the job of getting around was made an erratic experience by his errant limbs. Floating and flapping around the screen like Woody in *Toy Story*, even the simplest of actions, such as tethering his bullwhip to a hook, became frustrating.

Part of a trilogy of side-scrolling action games set inside the same universe, and later released for Mega-CD, *Earnest Evans* is a challenging if unwieldy action adventure that is gallantly rescued by some effective level and enemy design. Like the best action flicks, it's not perfect, but it certainly has its moments. *

FE

WEAPON 



>> No, your eyes aren't mistaken – we really are covering a brand new Mega Drive release. We've also looked at the Tomb Raider trilogy, gone adventuring with Final Fantasy III and finally got our hands on Strider wannabe Moon Diver. Enjoy!

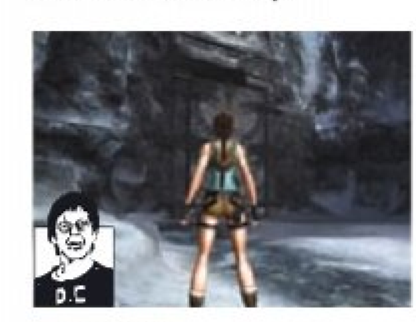
PICKS OF THE MONTH



DARRAN
PixelJunk Shooter 2
Beefed up sequel that cleverly combines puzzle elements with hardcore shooting.



STUART
Dissidia 012: Final Fantasy
An impressive update of what was already an interesting take on *Final Fantasy*.



DAVID
Tomb Raider Trilogy
The production values are cheap, but I do like these PS3 HD compilations.

>> PIER SOLAR AND THE GREAT ARCHITECTS

Pier Solar And The Great Architects

IF SECRET OF MANA AND DRAGON QUEST HAD A BABY

INFORMATION

- **FEATURED SYSTEM:** MEGA DRIVE
- **ALSO AVAILABLE ON:** N/A
- **RELEASED:** OUT NOW
- **PRICE:** $45 (£28)
- **PUBLISHER:** WATERMELON CORPORATION
- **DEVELOPER:** IN-HOUSE
- **PLAYERS:** 1

BRIEF HISTORY

» *Pier Solar* started off as a simple homebrew project by members of the popular homebrew Sega website Eidolon's Inn. It slowly grew in size until it become one of the most ambitious homebrew games of all time, a fact made more impressive by the far flung locations of its creators.

WHY NOT TRY

▼ SOMETHING OLD
SOLIEL (MEGA DRIVE)



▽ SOMETHING NEW
FINAL FANTASY IV COMPLETE COLLECTION (PSP)





***Pier Solar* is the result of six years of hard work from a group of talented coders living in various corners of the world. Once known as *Tavern RPG*, it's grown into a mighty behemoth of a Mega Drive cart that, while low on originality, is nevertheless a remarkable game that any RPG fan would be proud to have in their collection.**

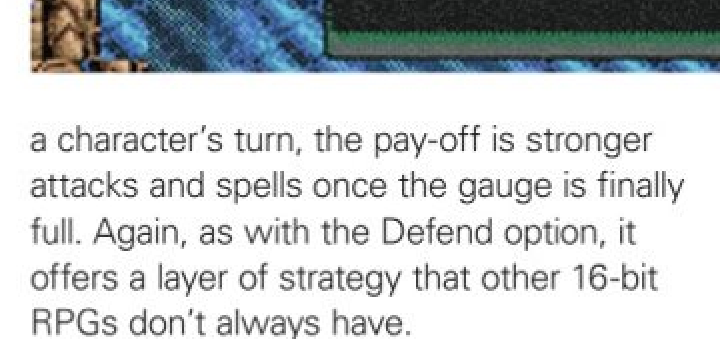
Unlike other recent Mega Drive projects, everything about *Pier Solar* is completely new and has been created from scratch. And yet, so tight is the coding, so assured is the presentation and direction, you'd think that Watermelon has been churning out games of this quality for years.

Taking on the role of the likable Hoston, you're initially charged with finding a rare herb to save your dying father. These first few hours are not only an introduction to *Pier Solar*'s enjoyable game world, but also serve to get you acquainted with the game's characters and its combat system.

Pier Solar utilises the same sort of turn-based combat that's been popularised in everything from *Final Fantasy* to *Phantasy Star*, but with a number of clever little tricks. One of the most useful is the Defend option, which enables you to protect any character of your choice. It's an extremely nice touch that allows for a fair bit of strategy, as you use stronger fighters to protect healers and ensure that you reach the end of some of the tougher boss battles with all your party intact.

Another interesting mechanic is being able to use Gather. While you have to forfeit

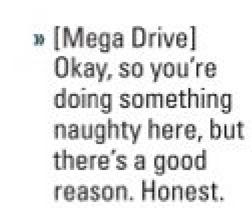
Thieves! Thieves! They're stealing my boat! GET BACK HERE!



a character's turn, the pay-off is stronger attacks and spells once the gauge is finally full. Again, as with the Defend option, it offers a layer of strategy that other 16-bit RPGs don't always have.

That's not to say *Pier Solar*'s combat is perfect, though, as it can still fall victim to excessively tough sections and bosses – although, let's face it: show us an old-school RPG that doesn't. This is further highlighted by the meagre amount of experience earned in battles, which can occasionally make grinding a tiring and overly long experience, although interestingly, things level out for the better as you get further into the game. One thing we do like, however, is the balance of random encounters, as they are far better paced than the almost incessant attacks found in the likes of *Final Fantasy IV*.

The final flourish to *Pier Solar*'s combat is the wheel system that it uses. Obviously borrowed from the likes of *Secret Of Mana*,



» [Mega Drive] Okay, so you're doing something naughty here, but there's a good reason. Honest.



» [Mega Drive] We're still amazed that we have a brand new Mega Drive game some 23 years after its original launch.



» [Mega Drive] *Pier Solar* has quite a distinctive look, with a style similar to *Chrono Trigger*.



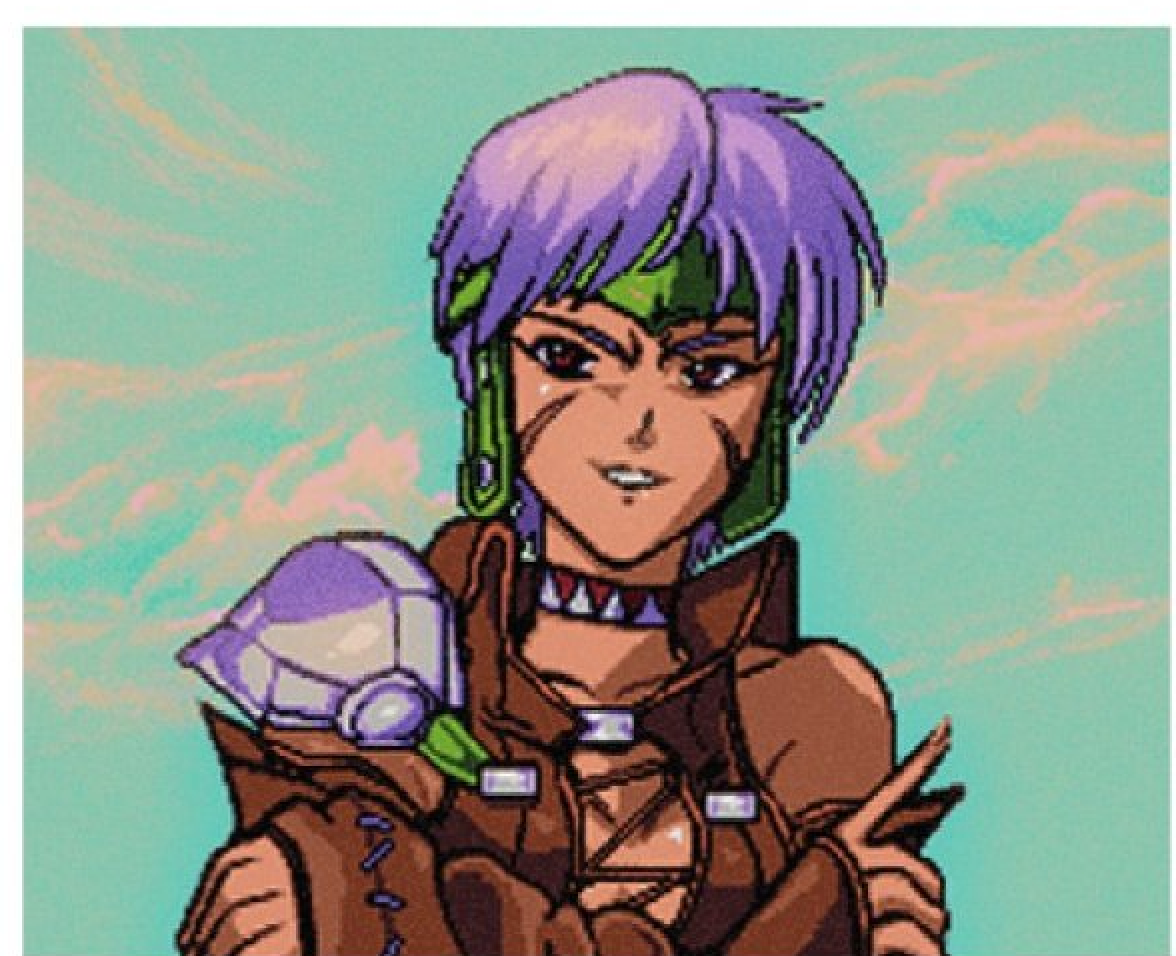


*GO DEEPER

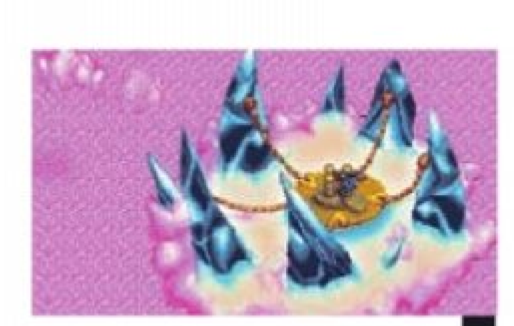
The facts behind Pier Solar And The Great Architects

>> The development of *Pier Solar* began back in June 2004. It was a project created by members of the website Eidolon's Inn

>> The game was originally due for release in December 2008 but was delayed after one of the original members left the project



» [Mega Drive] The cut-scenes used throughout *Pier Solar* are all of a very high standard.



Adventure to mega music

BY FAR ONE of the cleverest aspects of *Pier Solar* is WaterMelon's decision to include an additional Mega-CD disk. If you play *Pier Solar* using a Mega-CD, you'll be able to replace the existing cartridge soundtrack with an enhanced hi-fi stereo offering. It's a fantastic touch that even features ambient 3D sound at certain parts of the game, which all adds immeasurably to *Pier Solar*'s overall atmosphere. That's not all, though. Play the disc in a PC and you'll discover some cool little extras including wallpapers, artwork and even a small audio player so you can listen to your favourite tracks outside the game. Very, very impressive.



OPINION

There's something childishly exciting about unpacking a brand new Mega Drive game, and *Pier Solar* doesn't disappoint. While it would be easy to dismiss its simple story and shallow characters, I'm just glad that games like this actually exist. Here's hoping WaterMelon makes more games in the future, as this is a fantastic debut that any Mega Drive owner would be proud to have.

Stuart Hunt

it allows you to effortlessly select attacks, items and other skills, and greatly speeds up the combat, which is handy with all that grinding. There's even an option to choose between manual and AI rounds, although we did occasionally find that characters would waste attacks by picking unsuitable targets.

The wheel is also used throughout the main game, allowing you to select your inventory, save the game – thankfully in almost any location and at any time – and choose from a variety of useful options. Another nice touch is the notepad, which gives you story hints and ensures that you rarely, if ever, get sidetracked.

Aesthetically, *Pier Solar* is of a very high standard, with a truly beautiful musical score that's greatly enhanced if you've access to a Mega-CD and, as a result, a hi-fi version of the soundtrack (see 'Adventure to mega music'). Even without this audio upgrade, though, the tunes are instantly hummable and very memorable. Visually it's rather nice as well, having more in common with 16-bit SNES games – in particular *Secret Of Mana* – than earlier Mega Drive offerings. The characters feel a little too small at times, but the animation throughout is very good, and there's plenty of variety in the bosses and monsters that you fight. Cut-scenes are also of a high standard and impressively drawn. Though rarely used, their impact greatly enhances key scenes and is further testament to the sheer care and attention that has been put into this 64-meg cartridge.

If we're really honest, the biggest problem we had with *Pier Solar* is its storyline, which we won't spoil for you here, and its characters. It's not that they're poor by any means; just that they're very familiar to anyone who's ever played the popular RPGs of yesteryear. Fortunately, although the story itself is fairly predictable for the most part, albeit with a few nice twists, it's blessed with some quality humorous writing that recalls the heady days of Working Designs and its superb translations of quirky Japanese games.

While *Pier Solar* certainly lacks originality, there's no denying that it's a tremendous achievement that certainly wouldn't have looked out of place with officially licenced Mega Drive titles back in the day.

In a nutshell

It's not perfect and won't give the likes of *Phantasy Star IV* or *Secret Of Mana* many sleepless nights, but there's no denying that *Pier Solar* is a lovingly crafted tribute to the 16-bit days of old. Don't miss it.



Score **84%**

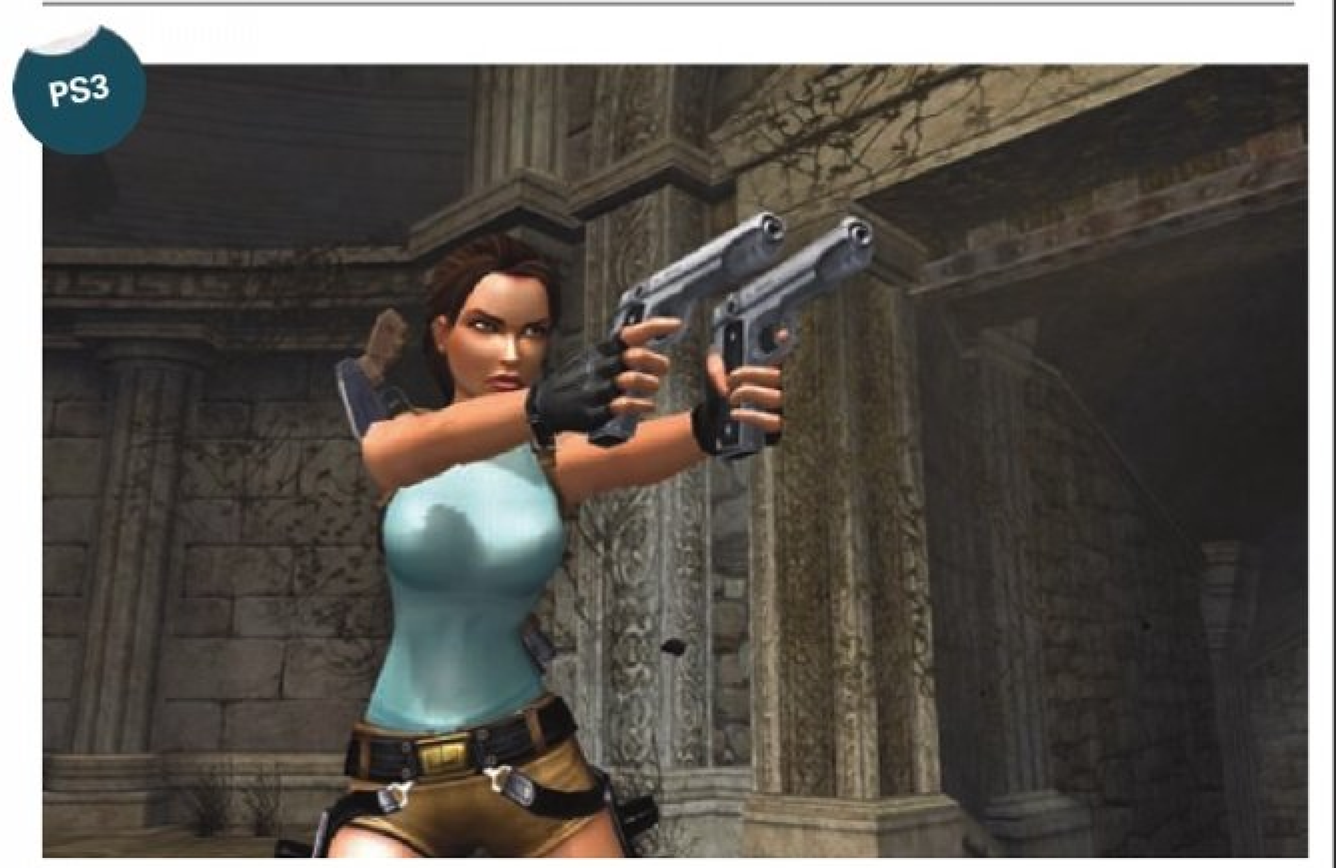




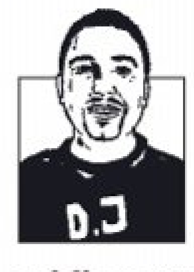
Tomb Raider Trilogy

TRIPLE LARA, BUT NOT NECESSARILY TRIPLE-A

» **FEATURED SYSTEM:** PS3 » **ALSO AVAILABLE ON:** N/A » **RELEASED:** OUT NOW
» **PRICE:** £34.99 » **PUBLISHER:** SQUARE ENIX » **DEVELOPER:** CRYSTAL DYNAMICS » **PLAYERS:** 1



» [PS3] The combat still feels a little ropey in places, but it's a massive improvement over Core's games.



If this latest triple pack offers one thing then it's plenty of Lara. Crystal Dynamics, while not really doing anything new with *Tomb Raider Trilogy*, nevertheless made the franchise enjoyable to play again.
This new compilation offers *Underworld*, along with *Legend* and *Anniversary*, two games that weren't previously available on Sony's current-gen console.

The end results are rather mixed, for while there's no denying that three decent games for the price of one is great value for money, the general lack of attention is rather disappointing. Graphically it's something of a mixed bag, with *Legend* in particularly looking rather rough around the edges thanks to dull textures and niggling glitches. *Anniversary* is a notable improvement, but, like Ubisoft's previous *Prince Of Persia Trilogy*, everything just looks



slightly sharper, a fact made more notable by the inclusion of *Underworld*, which is already available separately.

There's also a distinct lack of care with the extras. The developer diaries from the original discs are included, but the additional downloadable levels from *Underworld* are missing. We want a definitive version of a game if we're buying something like this and don't want to be spending additional cash. Yes, there are Home goodies and a theme for your PS3, but the extras still feel rather throwaway.

There's no denying that *Tomb Raider Trilogy* is a good buy, but we're getting rather annoyed with the 'quickly knock it out' attitude that many of these packs are taking, especially when all three games can be picked up at a cheaper price separately. It's somewhat fortunate for Lara, then, that her adventures are still fun to play.

OPINION



I'm not quite as critical about these games as Darran. Three *Tomb Raider* titles for the price of one is pretty good in my book, and while there's an overall lack of polish to these games, there's no denying that *Anniversary* and *Underworld* are still great games to play.

Stuart Hunt

>> Score **74%**



» [PSP] The cut-scenes still look spectacular, but you'll be laughing at the accompanying story.

Dissidia 012 Final Fantasy

THE SEQUEL THAT'S NOT REALLY A SEQUEL

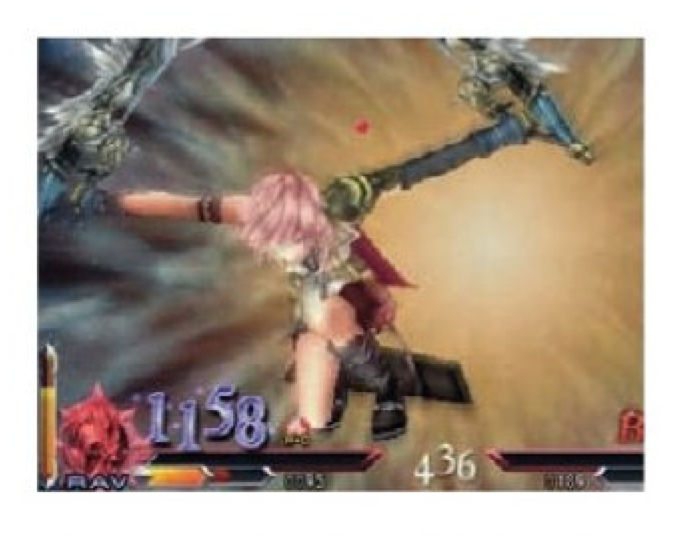
» **FEATURED SYSTEM:** PSP » **ALSO AVAILABLE ON:** N/A » **RELEASED:** OUT NOW
» **PRICE:** £29.99 » **PUBLISHER:** SQUARE ENIX » **DEVELOPER:** IN-HOUSE » **PLAYERS:** 1-2



The original *Dissidia* proved to be a clever take on the *Final Fantasy* series, and we're pleased to report that its sequel is just as good. Well, we say sequel, but *Dissidia 012[duodecim] Final Fantasy*, to give it its full title, feels like more of an update than a follow-up, mainly because a version of the original is included here.

Having said that, what's on offer is of a very high standard, with the sort of highly polished presentation that the *Final Fantasy* team seems to be able to churn out in its sleep.

The biggest core change is the sprawling world map that the utterly bonkers story mode now takes place on. You can travel around the large areas with up to four other characters and encounter 'Manikins', which will transport you to the more traditional battle maps. Similar in style to the



story progression of *Final Fantasy VI*, it's a solid addition to the franchise and nicely links the game's many gorgeous cut-scenes together.

In addition to the original 22 characters, *Dissidia 012* introduces nine more, including *FFXIII*'s Lightning and Tifa from *FFVII*. They're all equipped with distinctive skills and abilities and swell the core cast considerably.

Battles, too, have been tweaked thanks to new skills like 'Assists', which enable you to summon up another character to deal some damage. With its constant tweaking of stats, reliance on strategy, and hardcore fan service, *Dissidia 012* is not the most accessible fighter around. Having said that, it's now the definitive version of one of the most distinctive *Final Fantasy* spin-offs we've played for quite some time.

OPINION



It's not really a sequel, but a massive update with plenty of fan service. Little annoyances about the original game have been tweaked, while there's a wealth of extras to constantly unlock. Difficulty spikes occasionally annoy, but this is now the definitive *Dissidia*.

Darran Jones

>> Score **88%**

Rush'n Attack: Ex-Patriot

WE'LL SETTLE FOR THE 1985 ORIGINAL, THANKS

» **FEATURED SYSTEM:** XBOX LIVE ARCADE » **ALSO AVAILABLE ON:** PSN » **RELEASED:** OUT NOW » **PRICE:** 800 POINTS » **PUBLISHER:** KONAMI » **DEVELOPER:** VATRA GAMES » **PLAYERS:** 1



After successfully reigniting our love for *Contra* with *Hard Corps: Uprising* – as if it ever went away – Konami is attempting the same thing with *Rush'n Attack*. We'd rather it hadn't bothered.

Everything about *Ex-Patriot* is bitterly disappointing, from its clunky, messy combat to its woolly controls and uninspiring boss encounters. What makes it doubly frustrating, though, is that you can clearly see the game it so wants to be, trapped underneath the surface, kicking and screaming, wanting to be freed.

Borrowing heavily from the excellent *Shadow Complex*, with liberal sprinklings of both *Bionic Commando Rearmed* and the GBA *Splinter Cell* games, *Ex-Patriot* is rife with nice ideas. You can hide in shadows and call over unwitting foes, hang from walkways and pull enemies to their doom, utilise stealth attacks for quick kills, and uncover plenty of secret passageways. We even like the preposterous story, which is an archaic throwback to the good old days of Eighties action gaming.

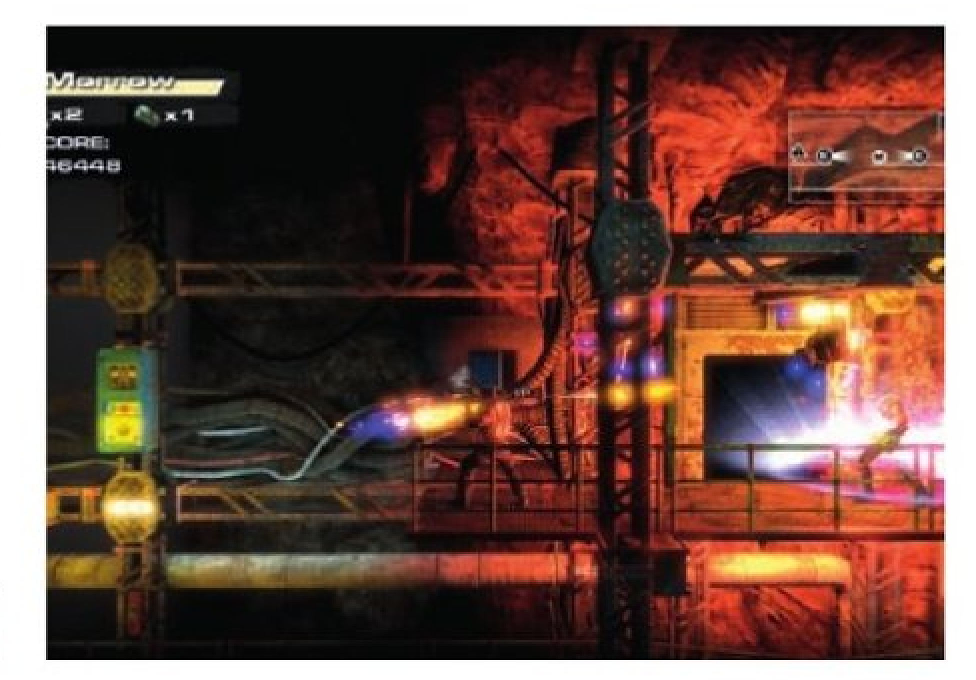
Unfortunately, while Vatra Games, which is currently working with Konami on the new *Silent Hill*, has obviously got a good idea of what it wanted *Ex-Patriot* to be, the actual execution is way off.

Combat is extremely boring and later becomes all but pointless, as you can use a handy slide attack to get your way out of nearly any situation, while most enemies appear to possess super hearing, rendering most stealth attacks impotent. The occasional boss encounters that punctuate the action are also maddeningly frustrating due to poor attack patterns and unfair game design. Add in extremely questionable physics, floaty controls and lots of little glitches like constantly slipping off platforms or magically teleporting forward at certain checkpoints and *Ex-Patriot* is a game that should have been left in the prison that your hero first breaks out of.

>> Score **43%**



» [XBLA] Recent 2.5D platformers have clearly inspired *Ex-Patriot*'s approach.





OPINION

While it's nice to see Vatra attempting to take Konami's franchise in a new direction, the execution is sloppy. With no restraint, the end result is a messy game that is unlikely to appeal to either fans of the original game or new arrivals to the franchise. Highly disappointing.

Stuart Hunt



PixelJunk Shooter 2

» **SYSTEM:** PSN
» **PRICE:** £6.29 » **PLAYERS:** 1-2

>> **Following on directly** from the original game, this is another superb effort from Q-Games that skilfully blends hardcore shooting with clever physics-based puzzles. You're still rescuing stranded scientists, but you'll now need to really put your brain into gear, while a stronger push towards 'bullet hell' shooting keeps the action fast and furious. An excellent sequel that cleverly builds on its predecessor.

>> Score **89%**



Dungeon Hunter: Alliance

» **SYSTEM:** PSN » **PRICE:** £9.99 » **PLAYERS:** 1-4

>> **With *Torchlight* getting** all the accolades on XBLA, PS3 owners get this rather decent clone from Gameloft instead. Essentially an old-fashioned dungeon hack for 1-4 players, *Dungeon Hunter: Alliance* mimics the likes of *Diablo* and *Baldur's Gate*, with looting and a variety of classes to choose from, but doesn't quite come up to the same standards. Still, good fun while it lasts.

>> Score **68%**

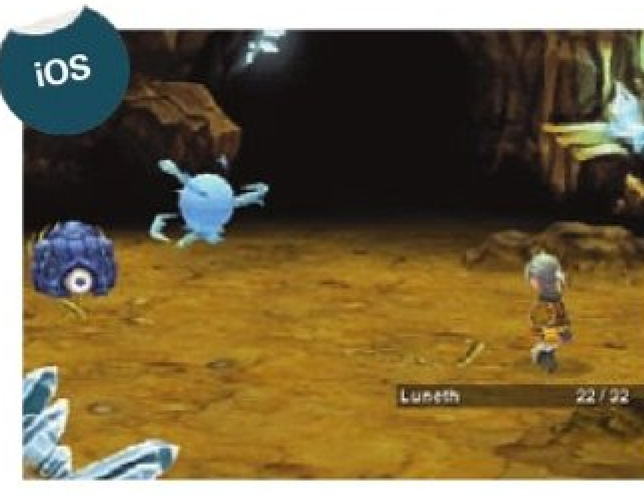


Lane Splitter

» **SYSTEM:** iPHONE
» **PRICE:** £0.59 » **PLAYERS:** 1

>> **Now here's a** nice homage to the good old days. The goal of *Lane Splitter* is to race up the screen on your motorbike and pass as many vehicles as possible before you crash. Touching the screen causes your bike to wheelie and gain an insane burst of speed, but also limits your control. The end result is a nice risk/reward high-score chase, which is only let down by overly sensitive motion controls.

>> Score **78%**



Final Fantasy III

» **SYSTEM:** iPHONE
» **PRICE:** £9.49 » **PLAYERS:** 1

>> **Although the engine** chugs in certain areas, this is nonetheless an impressive version of the hit Famicom game's enhanced remake. Anyone who's played the DS version will realise how well this works on the touch screen, while the high price tag is justified by the insane amount of great gameplay that's offered. Only a slightly iffy interface stops this from matching the brilliance of the DS port.

>> Score **86%**



» [XBLA] A basic kill chain score multiplier is fused into the action, but ironically just makes the control issue all the more apparent.

✱ GO DEEPER

The facts behind Yar's Revenge

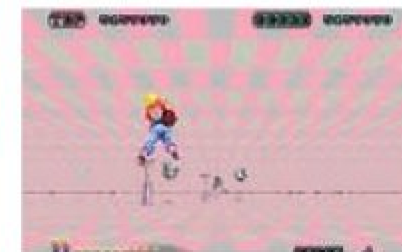
>> The game features a number of nods to the past. The Neutral Zone features as a shield, and the Zorlon Cannon is… well, a cannon

>> *Yar's Revenge* was developed by Killspace Entertainment, a studio that has ex-Obsidian, Pandemic and Red 5 staffers

✱ WHY NOT TRY

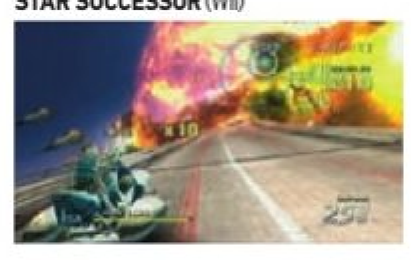
▼ SOMETHING OLD

SPACE HARRIER (ARCADE)



▽ SOMETHING NEW

SIN & PUNISHMENT: STAR SUCCESSOR (WII)



WHAT DO YOU GET IF YOU CROSS A YAR WITH A DRAGOON?

Yar's Revenge



Reboots are everywhere, so considering that the original *Yars' Revenge* is still fondly remembered today, Atari's decision to reboot the series after 30 years came as an unexpected, but rational, shock. More surprising, however, is the franchise's reinvention as an on-rails shooter.

As you would imagine, in its new skin, *Yar's Revenge* shares only cursory connections with the original game, basically re-establishing and embellishing the story and characters. This new version sees you playing the role of a lone warrior, Yar. The last of her kind – hence the nudging of the apostrophe in the title – she has been conditioned by the evil Qotiles to do their bidding and starts the game under their control. However, a few stages in she learns the truth about the bloody history between her race and the Qotiles, which sets her into revenge mode.

Yar has a number of new weapons to battle the Qotiles, and all are assigned to the trigger and bumper buttons. On top of her standard pulse shot, Yar has a powerful rail gun that kills most enemies in one hit but has to recharge after use; a limited supply of missiles that can lock on to and destroy multiple targets; and later on she can also access the famous Zorlon Cannon. If this wasn't enough, Yar can acquire a number of power-ups, including a neat spin on the Neutral Zone, which now appears as a shield that replenishes health but curbs your firing, just like in the original; a drone that automatically locks on to and fires at enemies; a defensive smart bomb that absorbs enemy mortar fire; and a pick-up that temporarily increases the power of her pulse shot.

Of course, many armaments can often mean cumbersome controls. And sadly *Yar's Revenge* is a bit of a fingers and thumbs workout; a marathon one, in fact, given that the game's paltry six stages feel incredibly long-winded – made worse by them feeling extremely similar. As enemies in the game can take quite a few shots to die, you find yourself having to keep your fingers positioned on all the attack buttons so you can quickly multitask between the various shot types. At times the gameplay feels less like you're piloting a nippy insect alien and more like you're captaining a submarine.

The key to success in these games comes from having that important combination of responsive controls and fast-paced gameplay, achieved through interesting and varied enemies and attack patterns, and impressive set-piece moments. With these elements missing in *Yar's Revenge*, the game just feels a little flat when compared to the genre's big hitters.

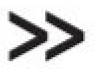
INFORMATION

- » **FEATURED SYSTEM:** XBOX LIVE ARCADE
- » **ALSO AVAILABLE ON:** N/A
- » **RELEASED:** OUT NOW
- » **PRICE:** 800 POINTS
- » **PUBLISHER:** ATARI
- » **DEVELOPER:** KILLSPACE ENTERTAINMENT
- » **PLAYERS:** 1-2

BRIEF HISTORY

» Written by Howard Scott Warshaw, and inspired by the Cinematronic game *Star Castle*, *Yars' Revenge* (1981) became the bestselling original game released for the Atari 2600. Despite its success, though, the game has never received a sequel, although a GBA remake by Telegames released in 1999 added a few new elements to the gameplay.

OPINION



Although you can never have too many on-rails shooters, *Yar's Revenge* is let down by a number of annoyances. The controls are nowhere near as tight as they should be, while the number of weapons can be off-putting. It's a nice idea, but *Rez HD* makes it rather pointless.

Darran Jones

In a Nutshell

***Yar's Revenge* is an adequate and good-looking shooter hampered by shallow level design and cumbersome controls. Most fans will see it as a massive missed opportunity.**

>> Score **57%**





» [PSN] There is a whiff of familiarity to many of *Moon Diver*'s bosses.

OPINION

The four-player mode is a mess, but there's still something pleasing about leaping through the air and facing off against *Moon Diver*'s hard-as-rock bosses. It's a little too old-school for its own good, but those wanting a tough challenge will certainly be well catered for.

Stuart Hunt

Moon Diver

» **FEATURED SYSTEM:** PSN » **ALSO AVAILABLE ON:** N/A » **RELEASED:** OUT NOW
» **PRICE:** £9.99 » **PUBLISHER:** SQUARE ENIX » **DEVELOPER:** FEELPLUS » **PLAYERS:** 1-4

If *Moon Diver* teaches us one thing, it's that you can't capture lightning twice. Of course, Kouichi Yotsui nearly managed it once before with his wonderful *Strider* clone *Osman/Cannon Dancer*, but this time he's not been so lucky.

Featuring an utterly mental story and spread across 12 ridiculously tough levels, everything about *Moon Diver* is pure old-school. There are even lots of little nods towards Yotsui's *Strider*, which range from speedy downhill runs to similar-looking enemies, but if we're honest it's really a completely different type of game to the 1989 classic.

The controls are fairly tight, although we'd have preferred a D-pad option, and flipping around platforms or scaling high areas is just as fun as it was in *Strider*. Other treats include a neat little RPG system that lets you level up characters and modify them across a number of key attributes, and they can be further enhanced by earning special spells, many of which are cleverly hidden away in the tightly designed levels.

Sadly, the biggest draw of *Moon Diver*, its much-touted four-player mode, is also its biggest hindrance. With four protagonists gracefully leaping around the screen it can become a nightmare to keep track of what's going on, making for some very frustrating deaths due to following the wrong character.

The fact that it's designed for four players also means that it becomes a tremendously unfair challenge at times; many sections feature ridiculous difficulty spikes that require you to constantly level up in order to clear them.

Add in some inconsistent aesthetics – some aspects, like the animation, are sublime, while certain levels look downright ugly – and *Moon Diver* ends up as an interesting set of ideas, which is let down by poor execution and the fact that it's just too difficult for its own good.

>> Score **65%**

HOMEBREW

>> The scene's latest news and reviews



I adore good shoot-'em-ups, so the news that Jonathan Cauldwell is working on a new one makes me very happy indeed, and I've heard rumours that Charlie Knight is achingly close to completing his latest PC blaster too. Yay, even more things to destroy!

HARD HAT HARRY

WORKING ON THE SITE FROM MORNING 'TIL NIGHT



» [BBC] Don't panda to his needs.



» **FORMAT:** BBC MICRO/ELECTRON
» **DEVELOPED BY:** TOM WALKER
» **LINK:** KIKSTART.EU/HARD-HAT
» **RELEASE DATE:** 2011
» **PRICE:** FREE

It's 1983 and construction on the colossal RS Tower is well under way, already dominating the skyline and set to be a Midlands landmark for decades to come… or at least that's what it will become if it ever gets finished. The workers have downed tools because, due to a slight oversight during the planning stages, the new structure has been placed right next to the local zoo and, when the inmates make a break for it, the shiny girders of an incomplete building are like a magnet to them. Of course, the builders plan to do something about the situation as soon as their tea break is over, although that might be a while in coming because the cheeky monkeys have nicked every single cuppa!

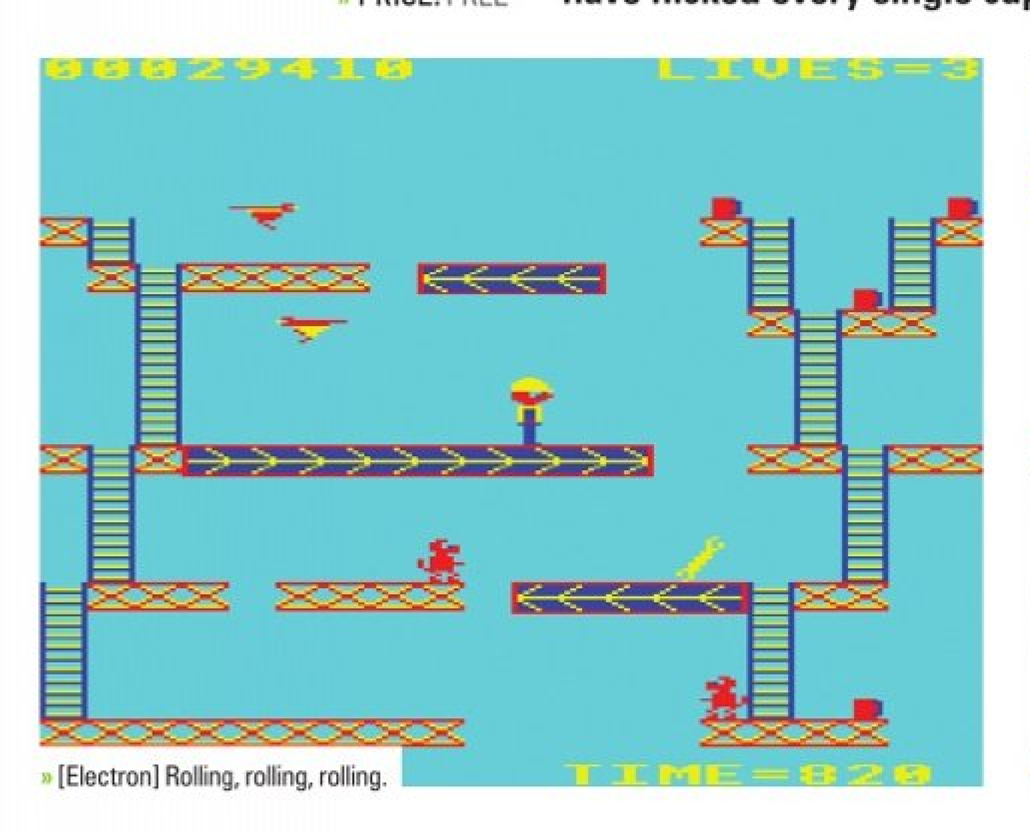
Because no builder can even consider functioning without a brew, it's down to the only person on site without a caffeine addiction to don a hard hat and strike out to gather up the mugs of precious brown liquid. That person is 15-year-old Harry, a French O-level student who was only around as part of a work experience placement. They could have sent him to the Spar to get more tea-making things, but where would the fun be in that solution?

Tom Walker's intention with *Hard Hat Harry* was to produce a game that looked and acted like something that could have been released for the BBC back in the Eighties, and the design is accordingly simplistic: sound has been kept to just a couple of spot effects during play for jumping, collecting or falling, and the visuals are amusingly primitive 'programmer graphics' – a term that usually refers to images drawn by the coder to make sure the game logic works before an artist becomes involved – that depicts monkeys, birds and mugs of tea for Harry to interact with, as well as the girders, ladders and, for some reason, conveyor belts that make up the building site.

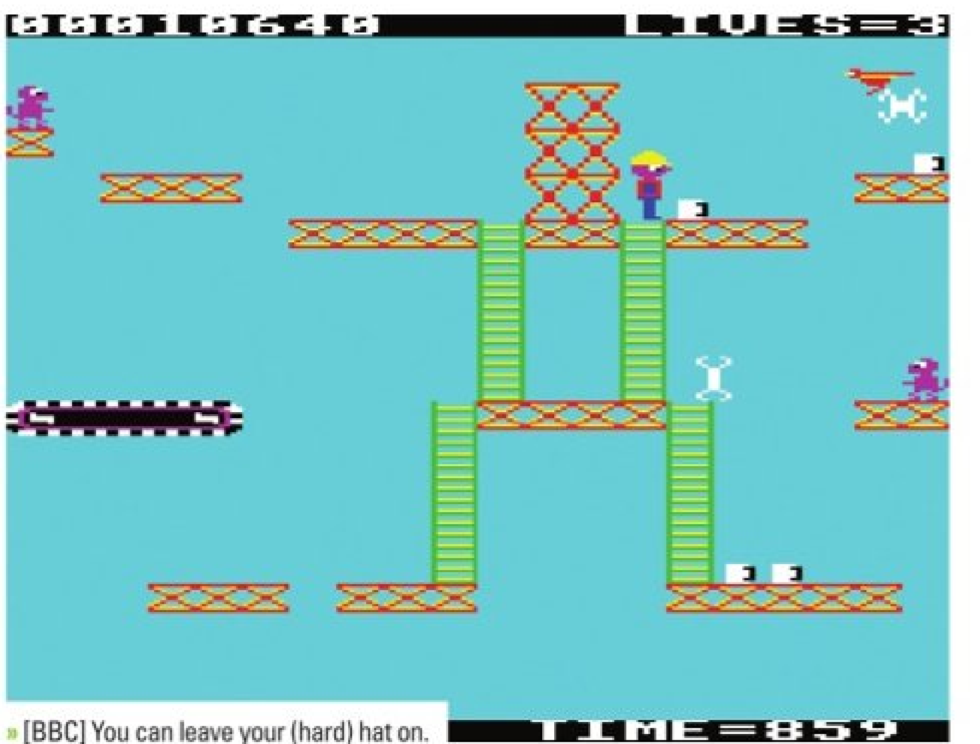
A version of Harry's workplace has also been pared down to squeeze it into the confines of the Acorn Electron where, although the levels are all present, a lot of the colour and detail has been removed from the in-game graphics. The eight-colour display of the BBC version is reined back to just four, and the conveyor belt animations are taken away in favour of chevrons on the ground, which indicate the direction in which Harry will be pushed.

The page over at Retro Software's website mentions that it was a "quickie", with Tom taking just a month to produce both versions. There are a few spikes in the difficulty curve – the first encounter with copyright-stretching barrel lobber 'Big Kong' will prove fatal for anyone without truly amazing reactions – and some of the jumps can be tricky to execute since Harry rebounds horizontally off backgrounds, but that's part of the Eighties vibe. Overall the controls are simple, the screen layouts serve up a challenge, and *Hard Hat Harry* offers uncomplicated entertainment.

83%



» [Electron] Rolling, rolling, rolling.



» [BBC] You can leave your (hard) hat on.

HYPER VIPER

» **FORMAT:** BBC MICRO/ELECTRON » **DEVELOPER:** KENTON PRICE » **DOWNLOAD:** KIKSTART.EU/HYPER-VIPER » **PRICE:** FREE



» [BBC] There's not mushroom in here…

***Hyper Viper* was** developed by BBC coder Kenton Price back in 1986 and misplaced until Retro Software was given his disks to scour. And, although it looks like a nice, safe rendition of *Snake*, this is an almost painfully fast game, and even players with stellar reaction times will struggle to play well. Recovering mushrooms next to walls or, even worse, in corners takes expert timing.

It doesn't play entirely fair either. New rocks may be prevented from materialising next to the viper's head, but there don't appear to be any checks in place to prevent impassable situations being created, leading to mushrooms being penned in on three sides and therefore impossible to collect without dying immediately afterwards. That's okay if it happens once a level because it can be left for last, but when there are two death traps on one screen it literally becomes impossible.

58%

NES 15

» **FORMAT:** NES » **DEVELOPER:** MATHEW BRENAMAN
» **DOWNLOAD:** KIKSTART.EU/NES-15 » **PRICE:** FREE

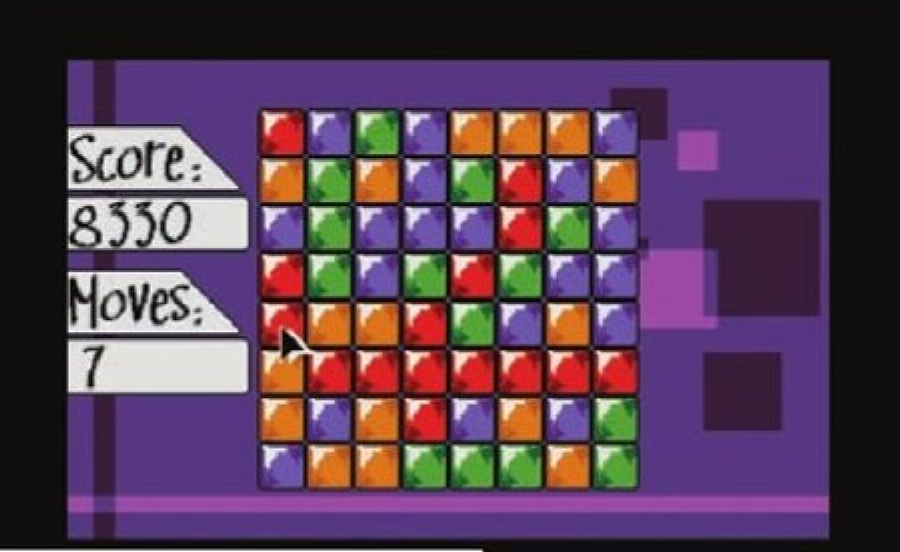
***NES 15* is** a solid, well-presented version of the 15 puzzle, with clearly defined blocks, a simple cursor-based control system and, since there's only a count of moves made and no scoring or time limit, no sense of urgency whatsoever, a mellow attitude reflected by the surprisingly relaxing chiptune rendition of Bach's *Prelude* and *Fugue In G Minor* playing in the background.

The problem is that, while it may well be neatly executed, there are already significant numbers of 8-bit implementations treading the same ground, none of which can really offer much in the way of longevity. Since there is no peril-inducing time limit and each game is randomly generated by the NES at startup, the number of moves required to solve a specific board will change each time, so players can't even use that as a self-imposed challenge. Still, it does help to pass the time when trying to while away an otherwise uneventful Sunday afternoon, and watching the auto-solve feature offers some entertainment value as well.

75%


» [NES] Not too hard if you know how.





» [Atari ST] More shuffles than an MP3 player.





KOLMIK DELUXE EDITION

» **FORMAT:** ATARI ST » **DEVELOPER:** PARADIZE
» **DOWNLOAD:** KIKSTART.EU/KOLMIK » **PRICE:** FREE

Kolmik Deluxe Edition is actually two different puzzle games in one package. In Classic Kolmik mode the playfield is a 12x3 grid of gems, and rows must be shuffled horizontally by either clicking the arrows or performing a flick of the mouse to produce columns of the same colour. A limited number of moves is available, with more earned when columns are created, and if the player runs out, the game is over.

Squared Frenzy opts for an 8x8 layout, where both rows and columns can be shuffled at will to form lines of the same colour horizontally or vertically. Again, there's a move counter that decreases with each mouse gesture, which is reset when a group of gems is removed.

There are no time limits to work within, so moves can be considered at length. Both games offer easy or hard settings – the latter adds an extra colour to make grouping more difficult – and in either mode the two titles can turn into scarily addictive time sinks.

89%

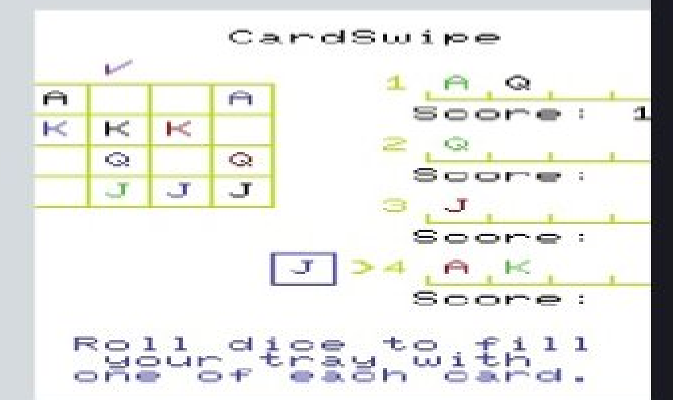
WHAT'SBREWING?

All the latest news from the homebrew community


» [Atari 8-bit] An eggsellent-looking conversion.

>> Egg him on

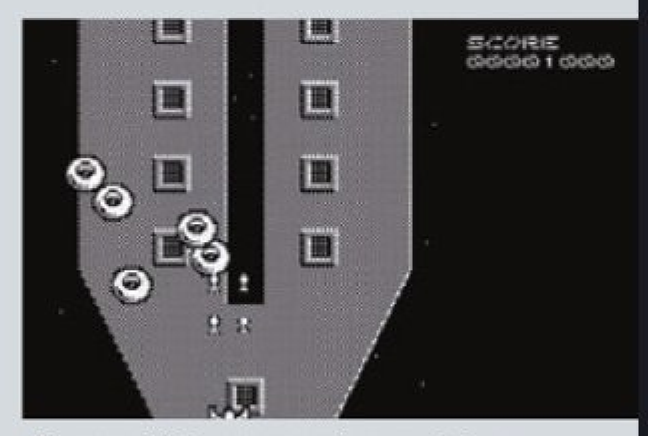
Pawel 'Paw' Gugala, developer of the Atari 8-bit conversion of *Dr Mario* that was released in 2010, has apparently been feeling a little dizzy recently. No, hang on; that isn't right – he's been making a *Dizzy* recently. **kikstart.eu/dizzy-a8-vid** conceals a YouTube video of a recent but still far from complete build. The poor ovoid appears to have put on a little weight since his last outing.



» [VIC-20] Pick a card, any card.

>> What do points make?

Despite sounding like a chip-and-pin simulator, *CardSwipe*, available for both the VIC-20 and C64, is a card game of sorts where up to four players compete to get a set of picture cards. Further elements such as the colour of the cards affect scoring, and it appears to be somewhat confusing from the description at **kikstart.eu/cardswipe**. It should be interesting to see how it actually plays.



» [Spectrum] Where no cuppa has gone before.

>> A nice cuppa

Jonathan Cauldwell's next Spectrum release looks set to be a vertically scrolling shoot-'em-up! At the moment it's being called *Milk, No Sugar*, which is presumably a reference to his older and still ongoing shooter *More Tea, Vicar?*. So far there's just the one screenshot doing the rounds that features a player ship, bullets and some enemies over what appears to be a *Uridium*-esque dreadnought.

HOMEBREW

>> The scene's latest news and reviews

WHAT'SBREWING?

All the latest news from the homebrew community

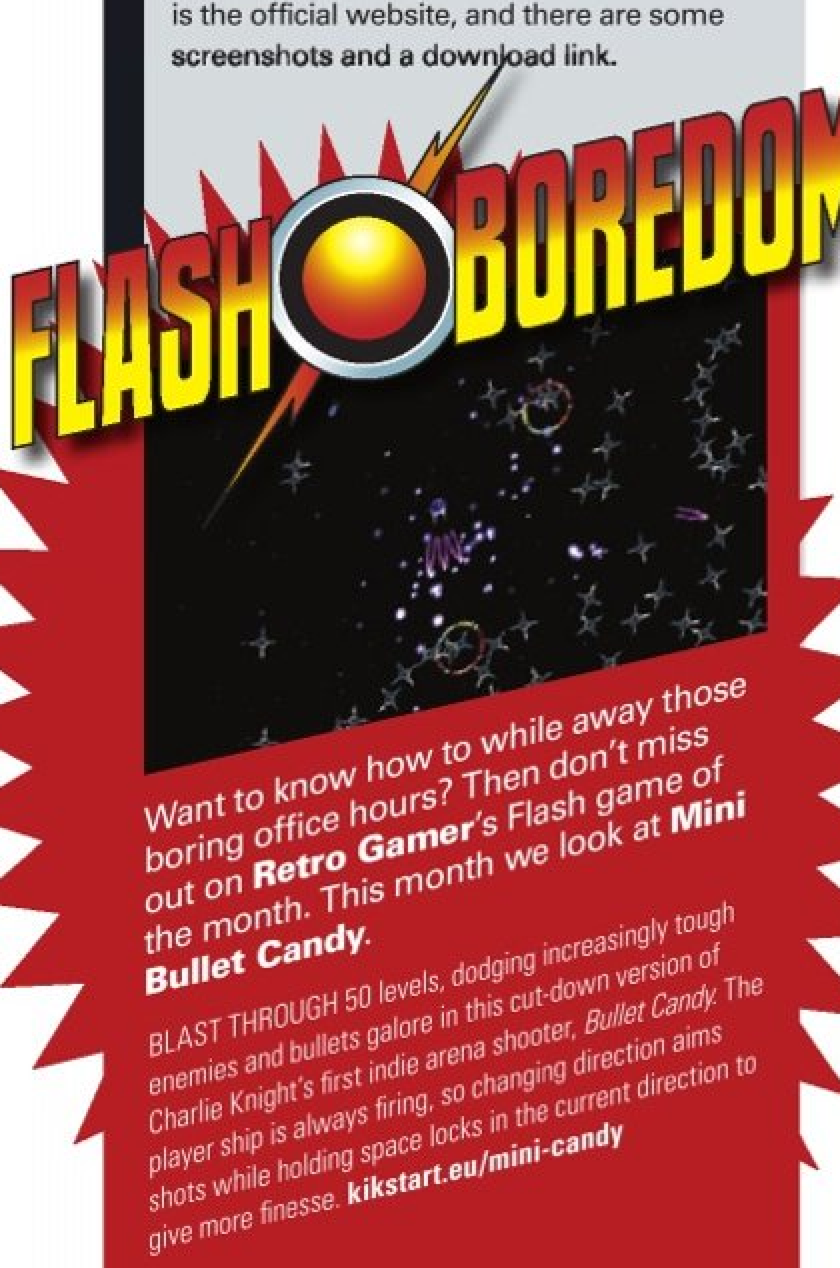
>> Who will win?

Space Race is a text adventure set on the west coast of Ireland during the Second World War. No, it isn't really, but with a name like that it's pretty obvious what the game is about. The races themselves actually take place within space-bound tunnels, and the action is reminiscent of the great Atari 8-bit homebrew race game *Yoomp!*, except with a probably unhealthy dose of potentially nausea-inducing spinning of the track and some computer-controlled opponents thrown in to make it more intense. **kikstart.eu/space-race** will get you a download.



>> A game for collectors

Edit Mode Games has just released *bullet. collect* – yes, that's its punctuation rather than ours – which the website is describing as a "bullet hell anti-shooter". Quite what that entails we're not sure yet, but apparently it revolves around there being two kinds of enemy bullets, and one can be collected by the player for "fun, profit and explosions". **www.editmodegames.com** is the official website, and there are some screenshots and a download link.



Want to know how to while away those boring office hours? Then don't miss out on **Retro Gamer**'s Flash game of the month. This month we look at **Mini Bullet Candy**.

BLAST THROUGH 50 levels, dodging increasingly tough enemies and bullets galore in this cut-down version of Charlie Knight's first indie arena shooter, *Bullet Candy*. The player ship is always firing, so changing direction aims shots while holding space locks in the current direction to give more finesse. **kikstart.eu/mini-candy**

OTHER GAMES WE'VE BEEN PLAYING. . .





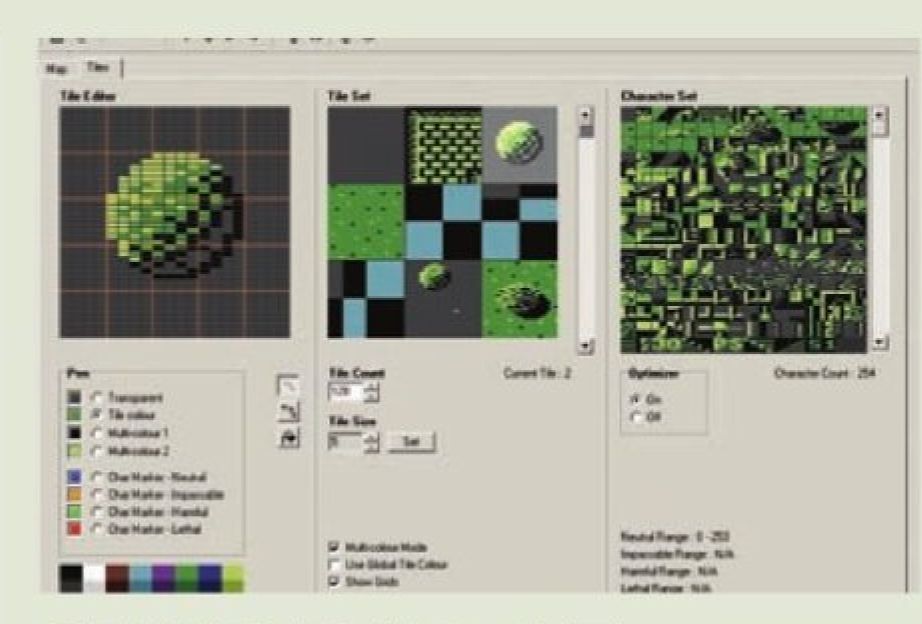
AUTOCROSS RACING

» **DOWNLOAD:** KIKSTART.EU/AUTOCROSS



***Autocross Racing* is** reminiscent of classic arcade racers of the 8- and 16-bit era like *Skidmarks* or *Super Cars* but garnished with just a dash of physics that initially means more dramatic collisions and spinning wildly off the track than an entire afternoon of *Top Gear* repeats. But since there isn't even a complex statistics screen for each vehicle to worry about and there's just forward, reverse, turning and the boost as far as controls go, things become more manageable after a little acclimatisation. Power sliding, J-turns and other breathtaking driving becomes possible with experience.

The overall difficulty level is adjustable, and completing the hardest stage in third place or better will free up the next for racing; there are ten tracks in total to open, with the final challenge being the prestigious trophy race. There's also money splashed around that pays for the more powerful cars, which is handed out for finishing a race or discovered in hidden hot spots. For the £5 price we can think of only one thing lacking really: split-screen or network racing, because hammering backwards to cause a massive pile-up is always more fun with a friend.



CHAR PAD 1.7

» **DOWNLOAD:** KIKSTART.EU/CHARPAD



***Char Pad* is** a Windows-based tool for creating background graphics and maps; the previous version has been around for several years and has been quite widely used for C64 and other 8-bit productions. This recently released update adds a lot of useful features such as the ability to change the previously hard-wired tile size or add collision information

But at the same time the editing has been changed and the entire tool is now based on directly painting tiles, rather than editing characters then building tiles from them; designers can no longer control where a specific definition appears in a set. *Char Pad* is still solid but could have been excellent if it had retained the original editing mode that allowed for more 'creative' uses.



MIMI IN THE SKY

» **DOWNLOAD:** KIKSTART.EU/MIMI

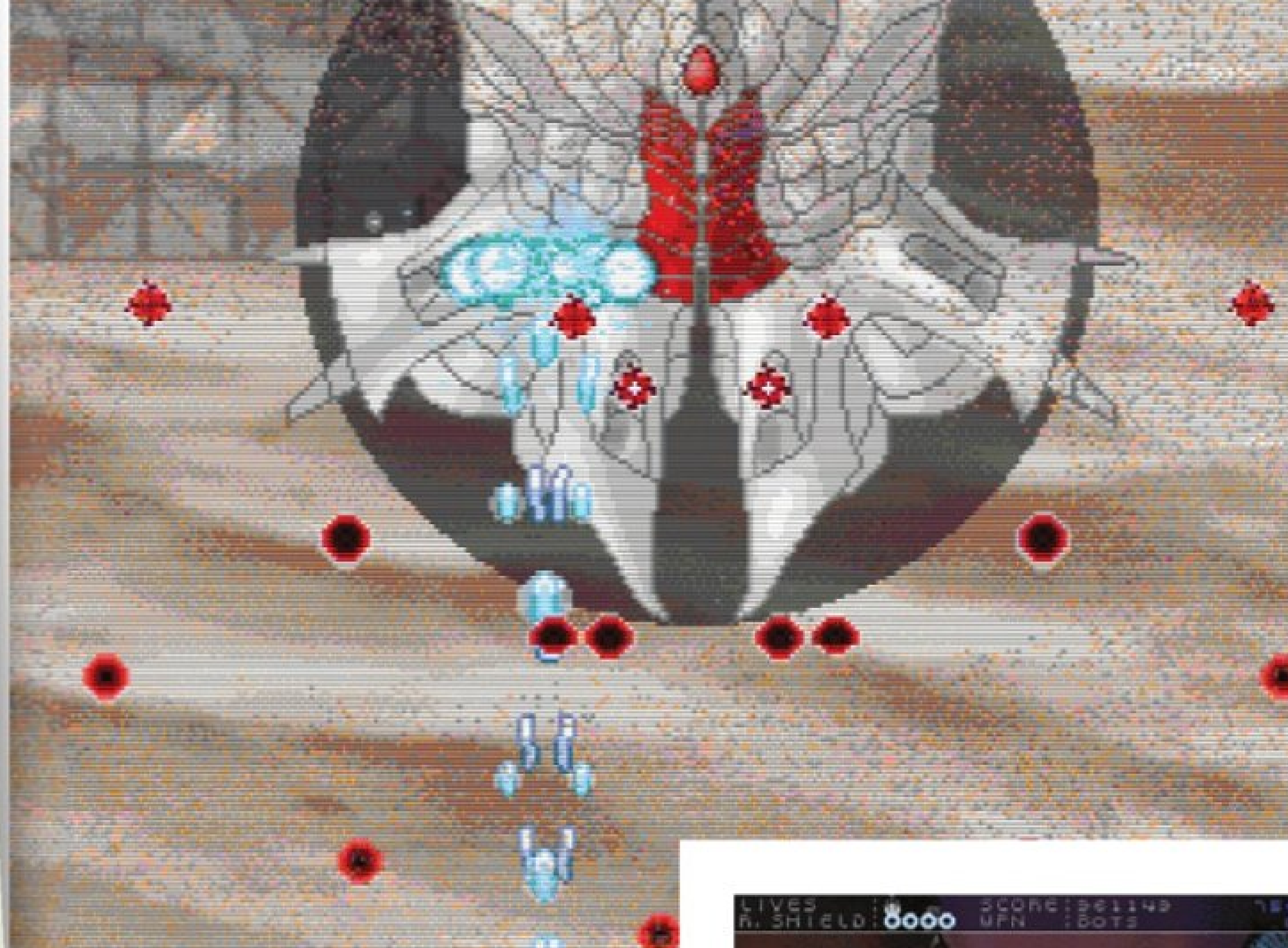


The skies above a nondescript town in Japan are being overrun by cutesy creatures materialising from vortexes; local resident Mimi isn't best pleased about this infraction and, since she has the power of flight, has made it her mission to protect the neighbourhood.

Shooting enemies earns tokens, which charge Mimi's dash attack – a temporary burst of speed and immunity. Kills with the dash charge the fever bar and, when Mimi gets the fever, the scoring goes manic. Along with surviving, the challenge is to refill that bar quickly.

The sweet looks hide a hardcore heart, and *Mimi In The Sky* is all about maximised scoring. Indie twin-stick shooters don't come much more manic than this.





» [PC] *XOP Black*, for those who don't take milk with their *XOP*.

» [PC] What *XOP*, doc?

HOMEBREW HEROES

Known on the Shmups.com forums as Udderdude, **Christopher Emirzian** is a vocal and well-respected developer of shoot-'em-ups, including the excellent XOP and XOP Black. He has recently taken the bold step of quitting his day job to devote more time to making even more games



Retro Gamer: What was it that got you into making games?
CE: I initially started developing games when I was a little kid with a Mac Plus and HyperCard. So, I guess, ridiculous childhood infatuation with computers? I also always wanted to make games, since I was in kindergarten, seriously. I would draw game sketches on paper during recess.

RG: And what draws you to shoot-'em-ups in particular?
CE: The shooting of things. Really, though, it's the purity of the genre and the level of control you have over your ship. Also, the scoring systems that have evolved really add new layers of depth, and it's fun to explore and come up with new ways to handle things in different parts of the game.

RG: You've decided to leave your job to work on games. How did that come about and is it as scary as we'd expect?
CE: I just spent two years working from home on Flash games and sites, so it wasn't as big of a jump. Basically I just work on my own stuff instead of other people's. I got tired and burned out doing client work and working with Flash, which is really limited. I also didn't feel that I could ever make *XOP* and *XOP Black* as good as I really wanted to if I was working a full-time job at the same time. I needed to be able to put 100 per cent of my effort into it.

As for basically being self-employed with zero income, at the moment I'm trying not to worry about it too much. It also helps that I have no real obligations, and no plans to be attached to any obligations any time soon.

RG: What have you found to be the most enjoyable and difficult parts of developing a game?
CE: Enjoyable is watching other people play and enjoy my games, and also making something I think is a real challenge or particularly clever puzzle – hey, I make puzzle games too. Difficult is making challenging content that's also fun – in the hands of a skilled player, of course – and fair. It's a very thin line between possible and impossible.

HIGH FIVE

The classic games that Christopher can't live without

1 Blue Wish Resurrection Plus (PC)
One of my favourite doujin shmups. Very Cave-inspired.

2 Xeno Fighters R (PC)
Looking to be the best GameMaker shmup ever made.

3 Crimzon Clover (PC)
Amazing shmup in development for five years.

4 War On Bugs (PC)
Another good Western shmup. Reminiscent of *Mushihime-sama*.

5 Hydorah (PC)
Despite some infinite scoring issues on the bosses, this is a very nice homage to *Gradius*.

RG: Who would you say are your programming heroes?
CE: Ikeda, of course.

RG: Do you have any future projects in mind that you can tell us about?
CE: More *XOP*. Maybe more puzzle game type things.

RG: Finally, what advice can you give to anybody wanting to become involved in indie development?
CE: Study the history of the genre you're developing in, instead of just making your game and throwing it out there. This is especially true for shmups.



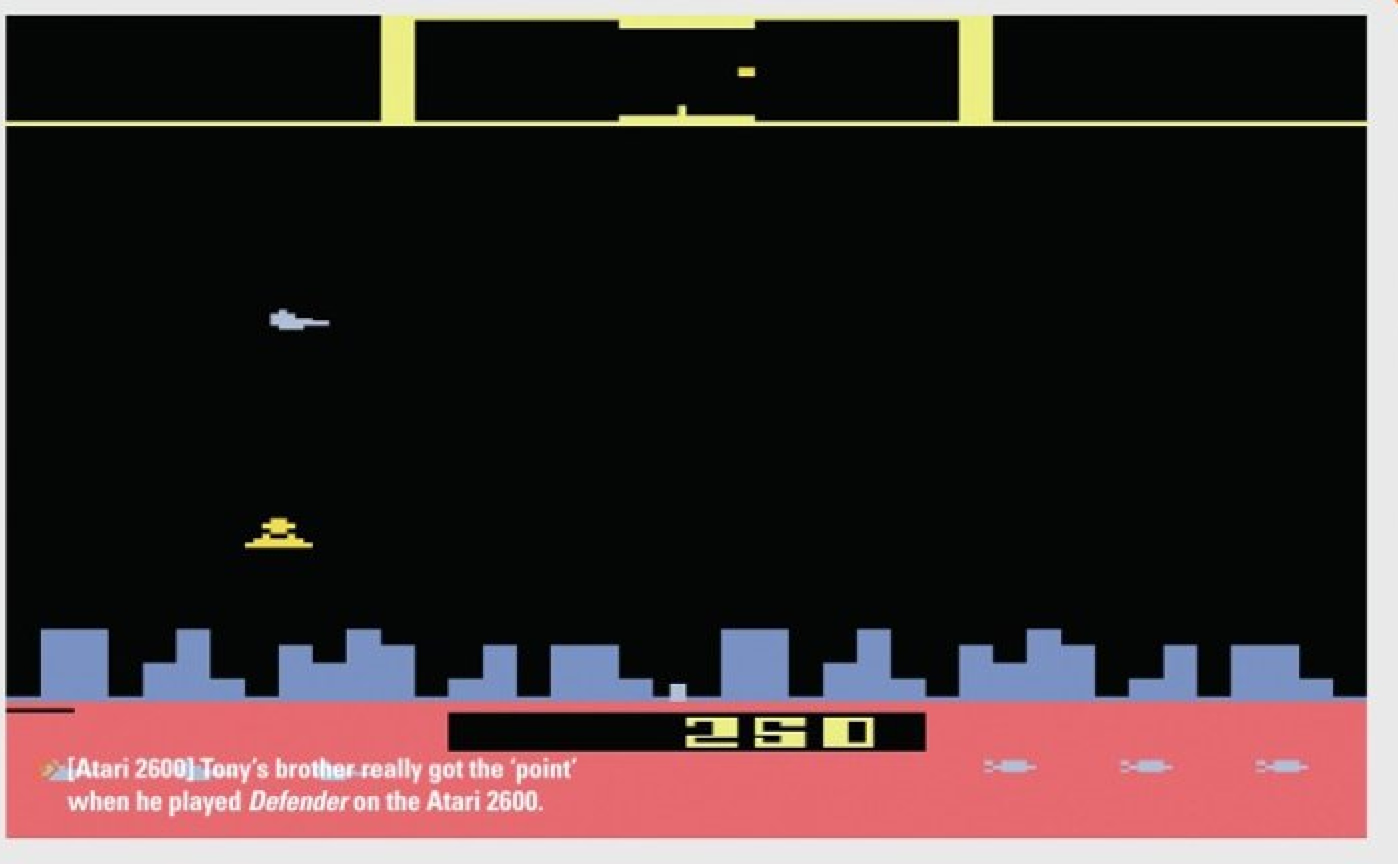
» [PC] It's a *Marble Match* made in heaven.

MAILBAG

HAVE YOUR SAY… SEND US A LETTER OR MAKE YOURSELF HEARD ON THE ONLINE FORUM – WWW.RETROGAMER.NET

STAR LETTER

PAIN THROUGH GAMES



[Atari 2600] Tony's brother really got the 'point' when he played *Defender* on the Atari 2600.

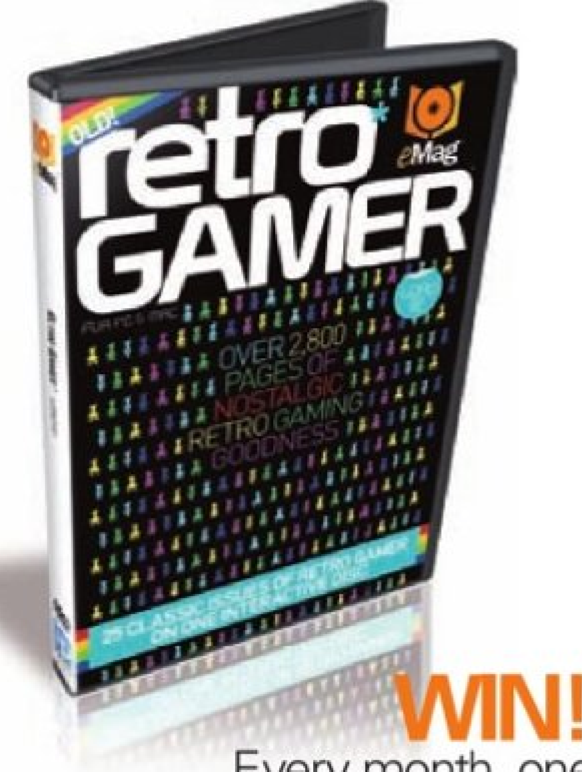
Dear Retro Gamer,

I once broke a handheld Tomy *Pac-Man* game over my brother's head because he wouldn't let me play with it. I have a lot of other stories like that if you wish for me to tell you. I can also tell you about another time, for example, when it was dark and we were playing *Defender* on the Atari 2600 and when my brother left the room I quickly made a hole in his chair and sticky-taped his joystick up from underneath it. He was unable to go to school the next day because of that incident. But I was good to him and made sure that all of his friends at school knew what really happened.

Yours sincerely,

Tony 'The Dominator' Dimov

Well, Tony, we're absolutely convinced that you're telling us a complete load of porkies, but it was so amusing and brought back so many memories of sibling gaming rivalry that we're going to give you the Star Letter prize anyway. You've also given Darran a great idea for the next time Stuart goes off to make the tea.



WIN!

Every month, one lucky reader will receive a copy of our latest eMag, **Retro Gamer Load 2**, a bargain if ever there was one. All you have to do is present a lucid, thought-provoking piece of literature that melts our souls. Failing that, something funny with swear words, or something *Strider*-related will go down just as well…

SUPPORT THIS MAN

Dear Retro Gamer,

In response to the letter from Matthew Lightbourne in issue 85, I would like to say how remiss it is of you to completely disregard Matthew's demands in the way that you did. Surely it is the responsibility of **Retro Gamer** to produce a magazine based solely on the demands and requirements of Mr Lightbourne? You must realise that it does not matter one hoot that other people may be interested in PC games or Rare; it is simply imperative that you keep Mr Lightbourne happy at all times no matter what the cost, and I think that future articles must be first passed by Mr Lightbourne before they appear in the magazine.

I think that this is a matter of urgency that you employ this reader immediately, so that in future you can fill the magazine with articles about Commodore/Spectrum games just to keep Mr Lightbourne happy. I, for one, would sleep much happier at night knowing that your magazine would be bought by at least one person in the UK!

Ahem… I am, of course, being extremely sarcastic. It really amazes me that some people seek to criticise your magazines based on their own narrow-minded and ill-conceived opinions. I am very interested in PC/DOS games and personally would like to see more articles about this, but I understand that any magazine is all about balancing between what is feasible to do and what the readers want to see published.

Keep up the good work, chaps, and don't be put off by readers like that.

Michael Winn

Thanks for the kind support, Michael, but we're more than capable of handling readers like Mr Lightbourne. The amusing thing is he often has a point – sort of, in his own unique way. It's just the way he puts his points across that lets him down.

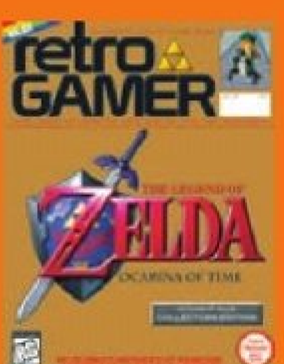


[Spectrum] Much as we love it, we're not alone in thinking there's more to retro than the likes of *Manic Miner*.

COLLECT THIS

Dear Retro Gamer,

I've been a big fan of your magazine for years, reading from issue 35 when a friend first introduced me to your great magazine, and have been a subscriber for over a year now.



CONTACT US

Snail Mail: Retro Gamer, Imagine Publishing, Richmond House, 33 Richmond Hill, Bournemouth, Dorset, BH2 6EZ

Email: retrogamer@imagine-publishing.co.uk



YOUTUBE UPDATE

FISHY SHENANIGANS THIS month as Darran's gone and invested in a rather lovely marine tank setup. Expect plenty of piscine updates over the coming months, as he trades his Lynx and Saturn collections for lots of pretty coral – or expensive rocks, as his wife likes to call them.

I'm a collector of retro games consoles and their libraries, but I feel I am not so great at seeing what titles are must-haves and being able to sort out the rares from the commons and uncommons. Your new feature 'The Collector's Guide…' was just what I needed. Well written and for anybody like me, just what they needed to make their collection just that little more rare. Now I know what to look out for on the N64 and I can't wait to see what other consoles and computers you will be doing in the future. This article was great so others and myself can improve their collections, even if their knowledge is a little lacking. Thanks, **Retro Gamer**. Keep up the good work!

Yours,

Paul, Blackpool

It's great to hear that you enjoyed the Collector's Guide, Paul. The feature has picked up a lot of interest, with some loving the introductory approach it takes, while others are annoyed that it is highlighting games that some people won't know of, which will subsequently drive up their price. All we wanted to achieve with the feature was an introduction to a system that highlighted some of its best and most unusual games and peripherals. Based on the vast majority of feedback, it would appear that we've achieved our goal.

CAVE RAVE

Dear Retro Gamer,

I just want to say big massive thanks for the excellent Cave feature. Cave makes some of the greatest shoot-'em-ups around and it was a real pleasure to get some genuine insight into how they make their games. While I've read the odd Western article about them in the past, they've never been as in-depth as the coverage you delivered. I've often had to rely on translations by fellow shmup fans to get the best information out of Japanese interviews, so this has been a treat.

Please give my thanks to Joachim Hesse for his feature. It really did make the magazine for me that issue.

Jeremy Bateman

We're glad you liked the feature. It was a real coup for us to secure the interview and we're very grateful for Cave's time. The company has been behind some truly wonderful shooters over the past five years, so it's been great to give it the coverage it deserves.

HOME BREW

Dear Retro Gamer,

As a subscriber may I firstly say how amazed I am that you manage to keep each issue fresh, and create such eager anticipation each time a new issue is nearly due – so thanks for that!

The reason for my writing to you is this: I am just about to embark on a project to give my old Commodore Plus/4 – more coverage, please! – a new lease of life by making a cable to connect to a PC, which will ultimately act as an external disk drive. From what I have read this will enable me to load games direct from my PC to my Plus/4. Many years ago the 'feel' of a good deal of computer mags was DIY, and they regularly ran features on home projects.

> "It was a real pleasure to get some insight into how Cave make their games"

RETROBATE PROFILE



Name:	Andrew Masters
Joined:	4 January 2010
Location:	Durham
Occupation:	Tech support at call centre
Website:	Not given
Fave Games System:	ZX Spectrum



[Xbox 360] It's always a pleasure when you can bring attention to a company that genuinely deserves it.

BEAT THE TEAM

Think you're good at retro games? See if you can beat the staff at some of their favourite titles



High Score: 73,550



DARRAN

CHOSEN GAME: CACOMA KNIGHT IN BIZYLAND

Why I picked it: It's a *Qix* clone and I absolutely adore *Qix* clones.

Handy tip: Try to make your lines as long as possible, as you'll score far more points.



High Score: 220,710



STUART

CHOSEN GAME: STAR WARS

Why I picked it: Because it's one of my favourite arcade games and I never get bored of playing it.

Handy tip: If you're not a real man like me, start on a higher difficulty level for more points.



High Score: 124



DAVID

CHOSEN GAME: THE SIMPSONS

Why I picked it: Because after all these years it's still one of the best *Simpsons* games around.

Handy tip: As with many scrolling fighters it's rather tough, so be sure to play with a friend.

From the forum

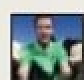
» To have your say visit www.retrogamer.net/forum

Every month, Retro Gamer asks a question on the forum and prints the best replies. This month we wanted to know…

What is your favourite Zelda game?



merman I'm going to cheat and say *Wind Waker* with the bonus disc on the GameCube. I didn't have an N64 back then, so this was my chance to catch up on the outstanding *Ocarina Of Time*. Of course, the one thing you know with the *Zelda* series is that there will be a new game along to satisfy those cravings for running around in a green suit with a big sword…

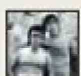


the_hawk *Wind Waker*. It's the first one I got completely absorbed by.

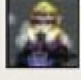
I know how immense *Ocarina Of Time* was and everybody loved it, but I just couldn't get into it and I'm not sure I can explain why. For some reason, though, I absolutely loved every cel-shaded second of *Wind Waker*.



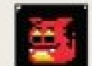
jdanddiet I've really tried to love the *Zelda* games but just can't get into them. I think I just prefer my RPGs more dirty and gritty.



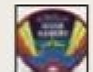
Bub&Bob *Phantom Hourglass* for DS is my favourite because… it's the only one I've ever played. It's probably a little simple but the controls work really well and it's quite absorbing.



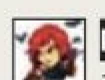
Roo *Ocarina Of Time*. What a game. I still play it today, even if it is only to watch the beautiful credits sequence, or run around Hyrule Field, the Lost Woods and the Market. I'm counting down the days to the 3DS remake.



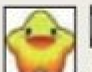
joefish *The Legend Of Zelda: Link's Awakening* for the original Game Boy. *Ocarina Of Time* may have had a great twist and loads more gameplay, but you still wanted to finish the game and save everyone. *Link's Awakening* had characters so charming that when it begins to dawn on you that they will all cease to exist if you complete the game, you actually don't want it to end. Going up the mountain to finish the story is one of the most heartbreaking experiences in gaming.



sscott *Ocarina*. How they got such a vast and stunning game onto one of those carts still amazes me. Took me months to complete but I've never felt prouder. Well, apart from the birth of my kids, possibly!



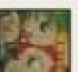
Miketendo *The Legend Of Zelda: A Link To The Past* is by far my favourite *Zelda* game. A lot of gamers are shocked that my answer isn't *Ocarina*, but for me, *Link To The Past* gave me the absolute best memories out of any *Zelda* game ever. This was the first time that a *Zelda* game got a fleshed out story that I really cared about. Saving Zelda actually mattered, and the fate of the world was at stake. The transfer between light and dark worlds was a new twist that worked really well for the game, and opened up the exploration of the series for future titles. Between the awesome graphics and amazing music, I was stunned then and am still stunned to this day whenever I play *Link To The Past*.



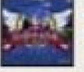
Morkin *Wind Waker* on the GameCube, as it's the only *Zelda* game that I've actually finished, I'm ashamed to say. I absolutely adored the graphics and actually enjoyed all the sailing around, despite others hating it. *Wind Waker* was a real treat from start to finish and a game that I plan on replaying some day.



Mayhem *Link To The Past* all the way for me. Sure, *Ocarina* is good, but *LTTP* set the groundwork for most of the *Zelda* games that followed, it has the most dungeons of all *Zelda* games AND they are all fun to play. It used some mechanics not really repeated since, had an excellent light/dark world concept, and a sense of expanse and mystery about it as you tried to discover new ways to use all the items you'd picked up. I still haven't earned that blimming heart piece in the digging game in 20 years, though!



nakamura *Link's Awakening* for sure. It is a perfect 10. The design of the island is wonderful, as are the brilliantly fiendish dungeons. It is perhaps the most charming game I have ever played and it comes in just four 'colours'.



SonicTheHedgehog *Ocarina Of Time*. Simply the best game world and level design ever. The music was also, in my opinion, the series highlight, as were the dungeons, and there were plenty of side missions and mini-games to keep you occupied after you had finished the main quest.

markopoloman The Wii one. It's the only one I have ever played – and I thought it was a bit rubbish.



webding *A Link To The Past*. It was the first one I'd played, and I couldn't believe how long it was, yet it was always fun and kept a sense of wonder – you genuinely felt like you were exploring and finding secrets. The difficulty curve was pitched just right, and learning new techniques to help you progress never felt convoluted. Plus everyone likes throwing chickens about.

bsg I never understood the appeal at first of the *Zelda* games – until I got a copy of *A Link To The Past* and I was hooked!

YOUR OPINION PLEASE

BEST MORTAL KOMBAT

Joey Let's talk about your fave games of the series, your characters of choice and anything else.

Liamh1982 Favourite game: *Deadly Alliance*. The switching of styles, the fighting mechanics, the sheer amount of content and fan service.

Spooky I liked Kitana, mostly because she was the only character whose Fatalities I could master.

Dam I really lost the *Mortal Kombat* series after *MK II*, and having just played the demo, the gameplay seems very similar to *Mortal Kombat* of old. Quite wooden and not very exciting.

Skull Commander I'm a big fan of the series, and to lambaste it for not having enough depth is missing the point. It's the videogame equivalent of *Big Trouble In Little China*.

SHINING WISDOM

rolan Oh my god this game is painfully boring. Certainly the worst first hour or so in a game ever. Does it get any better? I'm amazed it's making me run around without a sword for so long…

snowkatt It's a bit like *Zelda*, said with caution, but it does get better. Usually the first hour or so is the most boring.

Groovemaster303 *Shining Wisdom* is one of my all-time favourite Saturn games; an underrated gem, in my opinion. It starts off very slow but once it gets going it's a really good game. It had a very big influence on Camelot's *Golden Sun* series too.

c0nfu53d I remember giving up as I had got so far and was wandering aimlessly, not knowing what to do. These days I have GameFAQs so maybe I'll pick it up.

RED MAGES

Ferret Oxide When you play the older *Final Fantasy* games that let you choose classes, how many of you actually bother with red mages? Do they really offer any benefits or are they just a cop-out for not deciding which area to specialise in?

Megamixer Never bother with them myself. They might be okay at the start with the ability to use both black and white magic, but they can't use the more powerful spells from each class so they're not very useful later on in the game.

Freestyler The only reason I ever took a red mage was because I was bored of having the healer just sit there doing absolutely nothing during random encounters.

Rinoa They are fantastic in *Final Fantasy XI*, if not one of the best jobs to learn.

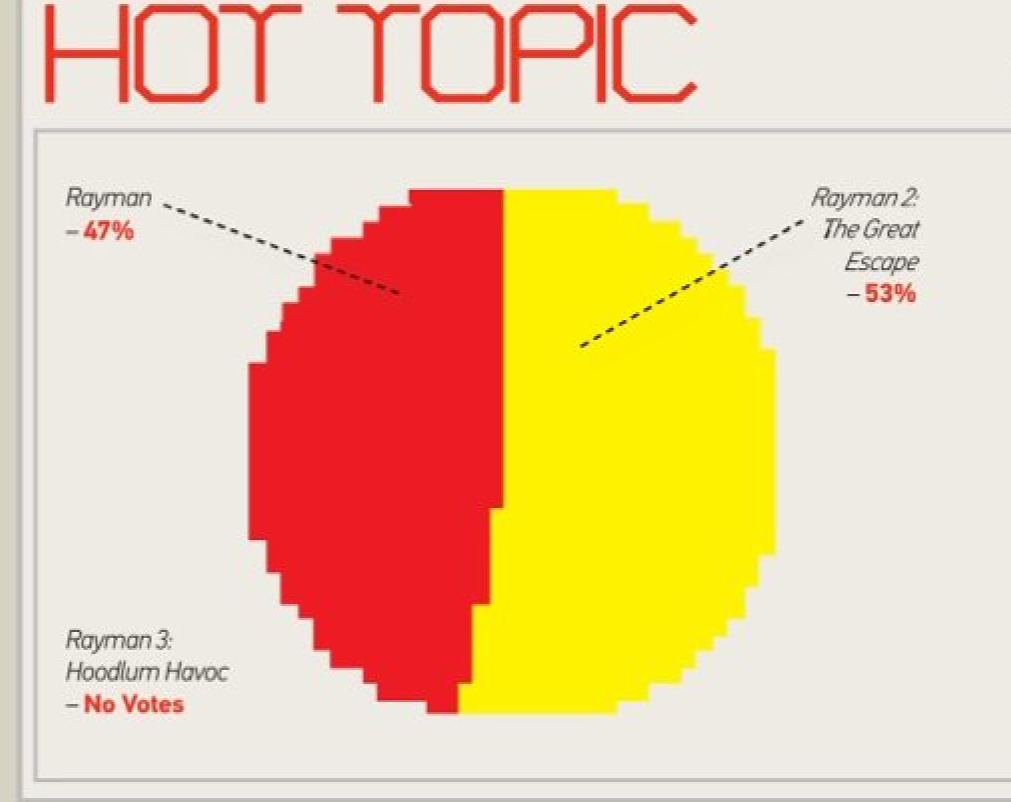
OLD vs NEW

Each month, we'll be finding out if the classics are better than their successors. This month, which *Yar's Revenge* game is the best?

Yars' Revenge (Atari 2600)	Yar's Revenge (Xbox Live Arcade)
63%	37%
felgekarp The new *Yar's* is just a confusing mess of targets and buttons	**Miketendo** I really can't stand the Atari version. Every time I play it I just get angry

HOT TOPIC

Best Rayman game



"The original all the way. Tons of charm, excellent level design, stunning graphics, brilliant music, and bosses that didn't annoy the hell out of you" **– DigitalDuck**

"For mine, *Rayman 2* was the best. The wife and I did this 'tag team' thing and worked our way through it on the Dreamcast" **– kiwimike**

CONTACT US **Snail Mail:** Retro Gamer, Imagine Publishing, Richmond House, 33 Richmond Hill, Bournemouth, Dorset, BH2 6EZ **Email:** retrogamer@imagine-publishing.co.uk

With the retro scene, as it is there seems to be loads of information online about making up cables, upgrading and modding old machines – perhaps a regular feature relating to this could be worth a look? There appear to be projects for Spectrum, Commodore and Amstrad to name a couple, all of which I would expect to be rather popular.

In any case please do keep up your exemplary work. I await the next issue.

Joe McLeod

Thanks for the kind words, Joe. We weren't aware of the project you are currently embarking on, but it certainly sounds interesting. We could look at introducing a series of features that look at the customisation of classic consoles and computers. We'll have a think about it and hopefully come up with something suitable.

DON'T GO CHANGING

Dear Retro Gamer,

I just want to add to the Future Classics letter saga by saying that I disagree with most of the things said in issue 87 by From Down Under. The guy is just being a grumpy old man who can't share the cake. Just because you want something it doesn't mean that you should have it. I have been buying **Retro Gamer** for over a year now, long before Future Classics ever appeared, and I don't think the direction of the magazine has changed much at all. I don't know how he can say that you are betraying the fans by doing a two-page spread on a great game.

There are a lot of things in the magazine that I don't care much for, but it doesn't mean that the magazine is bad. Not all of the buyers are older gamers who are drawn in by simple nostalgia. I'm a college student in my teens and I enjoy **Retro Gamer** because it is informative and, to a point, educational. If it wasn't for the mag I would be stuck playing the well-known games and I would have never taken interest in great consoles like the Neo Geo Pocket.

It is good to try different things and experiment, and it is worth taking risks. If the magazine never took risks then it wouldn't be where it is today. I understand that a niche product can be held up by a cult following, but it is good to expand. The problem with cult followings is that they can give rise to elitism.

Also you put my Retrobate profile in the magazine last month and I embarrassed myself in front of my family when we discovered that I spelt my name wrong on the website. Silly me.

Ben

We have massive diversity in our readership, with everyone wanting different things from the mag. We're proud of the fact that reading Retro Gamer can be a genuinely informative experience for many readers, but we're also fully aware that there are just as many out there who want their monthly dose of nostalgia. All we can do is make the best magazine we can and hope that everyone enjoys it as much as we enjoy putting it together.

> "I'm a college student in my teens and I enjoy Retro Gamer because it is educational"

DISCUSSED THIS MONTH

Board games

Thanks to forum member skylarking and freelancer Stuart Campbell we've started to build up a series of board games based on classic videogames. We've already managed to get our mitts on *Street Fighter II* and *Defender*, and have pestered a couple of members of *games™* to give us their *Zaxxon* and *Pac-Man* games. Needless to say you can expect an article – or even a series of ongoing ones – in the very next issue of the magazine. Providing, of course, that we can tear ourselves away from them.



[PS2] We have more post about Future Classic than any other article. We'll be shifting the focus to more unusual titles over the coming issues.

CURRENTLY PLAYING





DARRAN

Persona 3 Portable

If you've never played a *Persona* game before, this is the perfect place to start. It's a great cross between a high school simulator and a dungeon crawler and is filled with clever fight mechanics and great characters.





STUART

Mortal Kombat

Deadlines meant that it was impossible to review the ninth *Mortal Kombat* game this month, but that hasn't stopped me from playing it. Darran's not too keen on it, but I've been enjoying it. Expect a review next issue.





DAVID

Portal 2

I'm always impressed by the sheer quality of Valve's games and this amazing sequel is no different. While it looks wonderful, the real draw is the brilliantly designed gameplay and the masterful puzzles. Truly unmissable.



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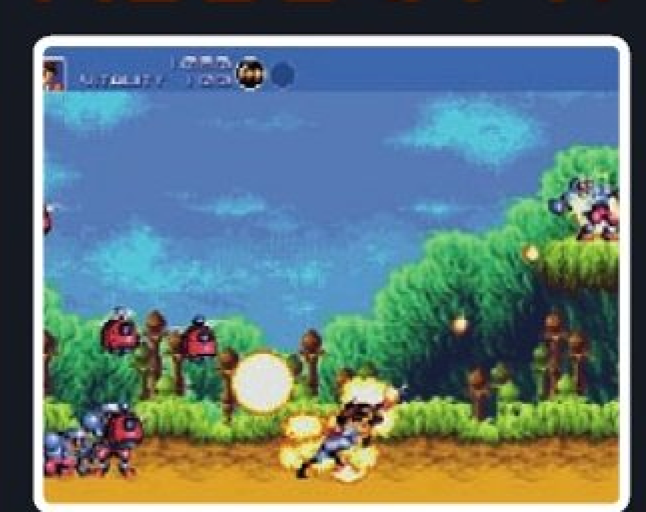
ON SALE 23 JUNE 2011

Birthday boy

It's Sonic The Hedgehog's 20th anniversary next month, so join us as we celebrate two decades of Sega's famous mascot



ALSO IN THE NEXT ISSUE



Treasure
■ In an exclusive interview we get to speak to the developer behind some of the Saturn and Mega Drive's best games



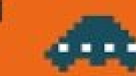
North & South
■ Mixing humour and strategy, *North & South* remains one of Infogrames' most notable games. We reveal its origins



The Untouchables
■ Gary Bracey reveals how Ocean turned the hit Kevin Costner movie into one of its greatest film licences



Playing With Power
■ Atari's Lynx featured a host of excellent arcade ports. We discover how key developers made the handheld sing




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ENDGAME



PRIME TIME FIGHTER

» Following the success of *Street Fighter II*, beat-'em-ups became all the rage, and many developers tried to capitalise on its success by releasing similar games that attempted to ape its winning formula. *Prime Time Fighter* is one such game, suggesting what would happen if boxing did away with weight classes and boxers began throwing flaming haymakers…



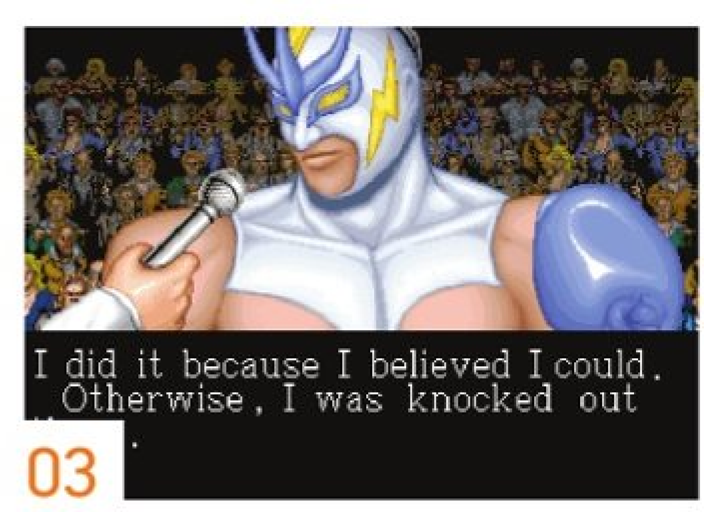
01

» Our masked combatant beats the reigning world champ, who oddly seems quite happy about it. What a gent he is, politely congratulating us. Still, it must sting getting beaten by a man in a fancy dress mask with yellow-netted eyeholes.



02

» What follows is one of the worst televised interviews ever, even by videogame standards. Seriously, 'What did you do if your punch didn't hit?' Why not ask him if he collects porcelain gorilla heads, or how he put his gloves on?



03

» This is actually a brilliant answer. Out of breath and having taken a few knocks to the brain, he says that that he punched him because he believed he could, and if he didn't then he'd get knocked down. Makes complete sense to us.



04

» The interview improves, but not by much. 'Would you please take your mask off?' the champion is asked. We're guessing our boxer won't be following the request, as he clearly likes to keep his identity concealed. How does he manage to deflect this one?



05

» Clearly he took a few more blows to the head than we had originally thought. According to the final panel of this ending, he never did remove the mask and so became the first ever masked-man boxing champion. Great.